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THE ATLANTIC BOOK
OF
JUNIOR PLAYS

ATLANTIC CLASSICS

THE ATLANTIC BOOK OF JUNIOR PLAYS

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION, COMMENT
AND INTERPRETATIVE QUESTIONS

BY

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FOREWORD

The Atlantic Book of Junior Plays is designed for readers somewhat younger and less advanced than those high-school, college, and unacademic groups who are so successfully using Professor Sterling A. Leonard's *Atlantic Book of Modern Plays*. While as editor and compiler of this present volume I have been as insistent as was Professor Leonard in the design of including only those plays that possess permanent literary and dramatic value, I have naturally sought only such values as are apparent and appealing to younger readers — readers whose tastes in the drama are still somewhat untutored and plastic. As only a small percentage of plays are written with these requisites in mind, my task has been more difficult and prolonged than I had at first supposed it would be. Because of this sparsity of superior plays for the junior group, perhaps those who have vainly sought for good examples of types here assembled will grant this volume the more cordial welcome. Teachers, parents, and librarians will have already discovered that it is far easier to meet the demands of the more mature students.

Anyone who has studied the mental behavior of those young people who are just entering the adolescent stage, has of course discovered that their interests, instead of being confined to the activities of child-life, have an extremely wide range. And the complex life of older people is perhaps the most intense and dominating of them all. Knowledge of these varied types of interest has guided the choice of the individual plays that make this complete anthology. I have naturally not ignored the patent fact that children quickly and easily identify themselves with the adventures and thoughts of other children. I have, however, in making the selection, kept prominently in mind the idea that the young people who are the prospective readers of these plays have interests coincident with those of the adult life which they are all now imaginatively living. Moreover, a child's reach — no less than a man's — should exceed his grasp.

Other considerations relating to this matter of adolescent interest have helped to determine the entire collection. I have tried to provide many types of plays, many varied appeals,

many different themes. To characterize each play we shall need the service of many different adjectives — symbolic, romantic, realistic, legendary, fantastic, poetic, serious, ethical, and other descriptive words that each reader will wish to select for himself as the one that accurately reflects his own characterization of the predominant note of each separate selection.

While I have rejected all plays that are either beyond the powers of young actors or for other reasons ill-suited to the amateur stage, — for I have assumed that many of these will be acted, — I have nevertheless had more prominently in mind the reading-quality of each of these dramatic selections. It has been gratifying to my sense of imagination constantly to think of the book as offering delightful hours for parents, for teachers, and children within the congenial circles of homes and schools and libraries, where these plays can profitably be read aloud and enthusiastically discussed.

We are all now living in the age of the printed play. Successful dramatists are almost as anxious to have their works published as they are to have them produced. As teachers and as parents we shall be more and more concerned in placing before our children the right sort of dramatic material; we shall be equally concerned in providing methods for instructing them in the art of reading — the imaginative re-creation of scene, incident, and character. To supply these two aims is the principal function of the present volume.

For help in carrying this project to completion my obligations are many. First of all I wish to express my thanks to Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, who suggested the book. Various friends, and especially my students in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, have offered many valuable suggestions. To the authors and publishers who have generously granted their permission, I have made specific acknowledgment elsewhere. I am, however, very particularly indebted to Miss M. Agnes Edwards, a graduate of the University of California. From the beginning she has been associated with me in the work, and many of the items are of her contribution. If the pages are comparatively free from error, it is largely due to her vigilant attention to details.

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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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APPRECIATING THE DRAMA

I

THE ROAD TOWARD SHAKESPEARE

It is a mere platitude to say that a young person's interest in dramatic scenes and incidents is instinctive; it is equally platitudinous to repeat the truism that we must interest before we can instruct. It is less platitudinous to assert that even those of us who have been long engaged in the congenial task of teaching English to pupils in our secondary schools have too frequently been remiss in taking advantage of the inherent truth in these two axioms and building up through their basic aid a pedagogical principle that will guide us in selecting material capable of making quick and permanent appeal to adolescents.

As a group, we who are teaching English are thoroughly convinced that we wish to develop a real liking for literature and a real respect for the reading of the best books. When we think of poetry, we name instinctively the great poets of England and America, and we have the common desire of leading our young people along the paths that have so generously yielded us emotional pleasure and rational delight. When we have thought of teaching the drama to our students, we have instinctively named Shakespeare as the commanding genius who marks the great goal of our student's attainment in appreciation. And how often we have erred in bringing our young people too quickly to his works! Shakespeare lived and wrote three centuries ago. He lived on an intellectual

plane difficult for the most brilliant to attain; his interests and his attitudes are often far aloof from those of the present generation. It is little wonder, then, that approach to his wondrous stories and significant messages is frequently barred by archaic words, complicated phrasings, and a remote sixteenth-century life and atmosphere.

To secure appreciative reading of Shakespeare we are convinced that it is better to plunge into the stream of literature as it passes, and gradually learn to swim upstream toward the fountain head. Such a procedure will secure among our pupils a stauncher interest and a more genuine approval of the best.

It is with this thought in mind that *The Atlantic Book of Junior Plays* has been prepared. The selections included are all reasonably simple both in phrasing and in theme. At the same time each play has a distinct literary flavor of its own — one that is likely to linger and to lure to a second or a third reading. Study and appreciation of each unit of the entire book will help to establish a surer taste for the type of play that is worth while, not only for acting, but also for reading.

II

WHAT REAL READING IMPLIES

WHILE many groups will naturally wish to present many of these plays as finished examples of producing skill, — with all that this implies in matters of costume, voice-effects, gestures, postures, and stage-mechanism, — it is not upon these details that stress should at first, or even ultimately, be placed. We should in the beginning emphasize the reading. But first we must be sure that the term “reading” carries in the student’s mind all its appropriate connotative values. True oral reading of a

play — or any other type of literary selection — does not mean merely the pronouncing of words, even though the words be “read with proper expression.” Nor does the term “silent reading” mean merely following the thread of the story or securing the basic message. Both terms, oral reading and silent reading, involve much in the way of supplemental detail which adds richly to the fascination and the pleasure of reading; but those emotions have seldom received adequate emphasis in the pupils’ training.

Many of these supplementary details are dependent upon our power to re-create a situation and receive in the play of fancy approximately the same sensations that came to the poets, the story-tellers, or the dramatists as they wrote. The dramatist — to select but one from the author-group — creates his character, clothes him in appropriate costume, gives him individuality in voice, form, and address, and places him in a clearly objectified situation. The reader, noting the significance of scene, following the dialogue, and participating in the play and the byplay of emotion and incident, comes as nearly as possible into coincident thinking and feeling with the author at the time of writing.

Of course no one can do this absolutely; nor, if he could, would the reader know that the register of thought and feeling was exact. Indeed, in some cases it may be possible that a fuller pleasure, due to the nice definition of concepts, may come to the reader in his moment of re-creation than to the writer in his moment of creation.

The real teacher of drama can take the plays of this volume and develop in his pupils the power to visualize the scenes, to objectify the characters, to partake of all the inherent sensory effects — sound, color, form, odor, taste, and movement. For these items are fundamental in the process of genuine appreciation. They are both

the realities and the ornaments of reading. When they are clearly perceived by the imagination of the student they may create an impression that rivals in interest and clarity the actual production upon the stage or the actual happenings of life. The process may bring him into such close sympathy with the author that some of the joys of creation may thus be vicariously experienced.

We should not try to push too far the demand for coincident feeling and thinking between author and reader. Each individual lives a separate life and accumulates an individual experience. Every external stimulus, because of this difference, will in each person secure a separate and distinct reaction. The dramatist might speak of a certain one of his characters as wearing a red cloak; one reader would re-create this as a deep crimson, another as a vivid scarlet. Either interpretation would be wholly satisfying even though both shades might differ from that which the author originally had in mind. The matter in this case is too trivial to mar the general effect.

Similarly, the dramatist may imagine a particular house to face the east. A reader imagines it facing west. As there is nothing vital in this item the divergent conceptions are of no particular moment. But it is worth while for the reader to establish a definite direction which the house must face, for it adds to his ability to create perfectly definite pictures, perfectly definite sensory images.

III

THE SCOPE OF THE TERM, "READING," APPLIED TO THE PLAY, "WHAT MEN LIVE BY"

THE first demand upon the reader, after noting the title and the authorship of the play, is a cursory reading of the

list of characters. This list is not at first to be carefully studied; it is necessary for reference and for purposes of identification during the reading of the earlier portions of the play — until the reader has become acquainted with each person.

Demand for concentrated thinking and re-creation comes with the reading of the first paragraph printed in italics. In this sensualizing¹ process we form an imaginary stage four feet below the street level. Our eye is focused upon a few steps (I personally think of them as rough wooden ones) that lead up to a door which opens upon the street. Each sequent detail the reader rapidly sets within the picture — the long, narrow window at rear right; beneath the window the cobbler's bench with the loose tools lying scattered about; the gray curtains that form the crude coat-cabinet, the china closet, the hearth, chairs, table, and the door to the inner room. As we think of these items we should learn to endow them with appropriate shape and color and let them exist for us with almost the same definiteness as if they were actually before us. By training of this sort the imagination easily becomes sensitive to verbal stimulus and quickly constructs scenes and properties appropriate for the incidents that follow. It is of course inevitable, as I

¹ The commoner word, "visualizing," might here have been used, but it would not fully express all that I mean, for to visualize means merely to see. To "sensualize" this scene means to re-create it, to re-compose it in all its particulars, and to bring to the reader all the sense-appeals that we should experience were we to be actually present in the cobbler's shop. We should get a definite idea of the size, of the shape, of the glitter of knives with their keen edges, the dim cast of light, the combined odor of new and old leather, the sounds of passing feet upon the pavement outside, the irregular fall of passing shadows, the relative positions of the persons upon the stage, the voices of those who speak — in a word, all the effects that strike, simultaneously or in sequence, any of the five senses of sight, smell, hearing, feeling, taste.

have constantly assumed, that each reader's picture will vary; but in no essential — if the reading is consistently followed — will the details vary from the author's own preconception.

The stage directions preceding the dialogue in Scene One make a new and interesting demand. We visualize Simon, the cobbler, in action — mending shoes — while his wife, seated near the fire, is repairing an old sheepskin coat. We must know enough of their station and the ordinary ways of Russian life to allow our imagination to be intelligent in supplying the proper costume for each.

In attempting to imagine a suitable costume for Simon, I find myself recalling a portrait of Tolstoi in peasant's dress. To be sure, this was the dress of a gardener and not a cobbler, but I nevertheless appropriate for Simon the long, buttonless, loose-fitting shirt of coarse drab material that hung from the neck to the knees. An old pair of pantaloons of mongrel color and shape, heavy boots, and an improvised skullcap complete the costume. My picture may not be identical with the author's, but it satisfies me until it is later necessary to have Simon put on the woollen slippers, the jacket, the kaftan, and the tattered sheepskin coat.

As for Matrena, I'm not so sure. Feminine attire may have, for masculine imaginings, its own peculiar difficulties. But I recall that the author has told us that she's as "brown and dry as a chip," so I simply cover her gray head in a faded turban, select a coarse waist and skirt of nondescript hue, encase her feet in old brogans, and let it go at that.

Even this has perhaps taken more time than any of us will later need for the costumes of Michael, Avedeitch, Thedka, Sonia, the Angel, the Little Devil, and the rest. We know their stations and their degrees, and even though

our knowledge of Russian life may be scanty, our imagination will quickly create garments appropriate for each, particularly if we have been fortunate enough to have seen the players from the Moscow Art Theatre.

We should go further — and this is a new demand for many young readers: we should grant to each a voice that is appropriate and individual. Inasmuch as Tolstoi describes Matrena as being as brown and dry as a chip, we may appropriately conceive her voice to be rather thin and cracked and monotonous. And as she is in the beginning evidently in an unhappy, complaining mood, her tones are dominated by the querulous, satiric note. Doubtless her lip curls slightly as she speaks, and we know how this would alter her tone. Simon's mood, on the other hand, is kindly and solicitous, regulated by a desire to please. The voice which our imagination fashions for him is therefore open, soft, and full, and conciliatory in tone. It should suggest his nobler attitude.

This matter of re-creating the appropriate voice is one in which there is necessarily a large amount of personal freedom, but the use of this freedom must be intelligent; it must be consistent. Above all, it must by its definiteness and its concreteness contribute to the sensualizing and the vitalizing of the entire scene. It is an important matter in character-creation.

Having in our imagination definitely costumed our characters appropriately, and having, at the same time, established in our own mind a clear and definite conception of their features and their entire external appearance, we proceed to the more important though the more abstract inner qualities, — qualities that gradually determine in the mind of each reader the sort of person each given character really is, — good or bad, strong or weak, sly or ingenuous, stupid or astute, or any one of those innumer-

able attributes that help either to command or to repel our admiration and our liking, and also enable us to forecast what action may consistently be expected from a particular character in a particular situation. But, what, we may ask, are the methods whereby the dramatist reveals these individualizing traits?

Some of us, unquestionably, have watched a painter at his easel. A touch here, a touch there, a skillfully drawn line, a happy intermingling of light and shade, a painstaking attention to detail, and the scene or the portrait finally stands out in clear outline and revealing individuality. Now the dramatist works with the same general design of definite and individual portrayal; but he works with another medium—largely the medium of words. Analyzing his methods, we discover that there are four distinct ways in which he brings his separate actors into the clear, disclosing light of the reader's imagination:

1. By what the character says or fails to say.
2. By what is said about the character.
3. By what the character does or fails to do.
4. By what the character causes others to do.

It will be interesting to examine this enumeration more carefully and see how it may be analytically applied to Tolstoi's portrayal of the character of Michael, the most commanding and magnetic personality in the play. What, we may ask, is revealed by the first method?

1. **What the character says or fails to say.** One of Michael's marked traits is first revealed by what he fails to say. In the midst of those first tense moments after his entrance, he remains silent in the midst of Matrena's rage and Simon's excited explanation. An ordinary man would likely have spoken before Michael did, but he remains silent until he is questioned. Even then his

replies (page 15) are brief, immediately suggesting reserve, mystery, and calm. Later, in his longer speech to Matrena, he reveals both his religious spirit and his fine sense of appreciation for the kindness which the cobbler and his wife have shown him:—

The Lord be good to you ! I was lying frozen and unclothed, when Simon saw and took compassion on me. He shared with me his clothing and brought me hither. You have given me food and drink and shown me great kindness.

The later dialogue discloses other traits of Michael, but the most dramatic is revealed in the short but portentous reply to the Baron's currish taunt, "You had better see that the boots are ready when I want them" (page 20). Michael quietly responds, "They will be ready when you need them." Only one who possesses the mysterious gift of prophecy could, on their utterance, have known the significance of those clairvoyant words that indicate Michael's knowledge of the approaching tragedy.

2. What is said about the character. In listening to the comments which one person in the play makes about another, we instinctively take into consideration the relationship of the two persons, whether they are friends, or enemies, or impartial observers of each other's actions. Naturally, too, we consider the truthfulness and the intelligence of the persons making the comments.

When the dramatist speaks in the stage directions we accept his observations at their face value, for he, in a sense, is omniscient. For example, on page 13 Tolstoi gives us our first idea of Michael: "The stranger is a young man, tall and slender, with fine clear-cut features and a mild gentle expression."

Later dialogue in the play, as any reader may easily discover, further reveals Michael's several traits—his

industry, his skill, his painstaking attention to detail, his reverence, his seriousness, and his clairvoyance. As these characterizations are made by his friends, and as the comments are, moreover, verified before us by Michael's own behavior, we likewise accept these comments at their face value. Matrena is our chief informer, as in her speech to Anna (page 17): "He works all day, only resting for a moment to look upward. He never wishes to go out of doors; never jests, nor laughs. He has smiled only once: it was the night he came." In the later conversation there are of course many other bits of characterization that readers will absorb and fit into the complete character-mosaic that is ours when we have come to the end of the play and see him in the glow of a divine illumination.

3. What the character does or fails to do. We have already anticipated, in what we said about Michael's behavior, the use that the dramatist makes of his characters in action. Here they strikingly reveal themselves, as the old adage-maker recognized when he wrote, "Actions speak louder than words."

One of the traits that impresses us in Michael almost as soon as he appears is his kindness. This is perhaps most clearly seen in his gentle attitude toward the little girls whom Sonia brings to the cobbler's shop. He first watches them with keen and friendly interest, and he talks to them in the gentlest of tones. Little Nikita slips limpingly over to Michael as he sits on his cobbler's bench, and Michael stops his work to lift her to his knee. Anyone acting sympathetically the part of Michael would fittingly convey in his action here the kindly spirit of the man.

There is, however, something more than mere kindness in all these actions. His whole attitude is that of guardianship and solicitude and mystery. And to these is significantly added the spirit of adoration, for just before

the children leave the shop, all those who are present "are drawn to look at Michael who, sitting with his hands folded on his knees, is gazing upward and smiling as though at some one unseen by the others."

What Michael fails to do is also of significance. He might have resented, in action and word, the almost intolerable haughtiness and bluster of the Baron. But this man of mystery reveals his force by his calmness and restraint. His habitual silence and composure are the very qualities which help to give us our confidence in his spiritual strength.

4. What the character causes others to do. The fourth means of character-portrayal — what one causes others to do — is of course closely akin to the third, but nevertheless is sufficiently different to justify separate enumeration and analysis. Individual strength is revealed in a great executive who keeps his aides and subordinates keen, alert, and ambitious. We measure the strength — or it may be the weakness — of any executive by what his associates do or fail to do. And so it is with almost any individual.

There is something significant in Michael's influence on the other characters in the play, and this influence is not apparent in his spoken words or concrete actions; it is apparent rather in the attitude which his personality creates. He generates in the shy Nikita the spirit of confidence that prompts her to seek his nearer presence. This action, trivial in itself, is nevertheless significant.

Michael's influence on Simon is in the process of the play interestingly revealed. It is he who combats the force of evil symbolized by the Little Devil, and coöperates with the Guardian Angel in saving Simon's soul. Yet all this is accomplished by a silently working character-force, without either spoken words or direct action.

The foregoing analysis is not meant to be complete. There are scores of interesting items in character-analysis that have not been touched upon. What has here been written is to be regarded only as a suggestion for further study and examination, either in this play or in any other plays which the student may select. Many of the specific comments and questions in the notes to this text are comprehended in this method of analysis of Michael's character. The entire study is only an additional item to indicate the comprehensive meaning that rightfully attaches to the term, "reading," when we appreciate the full connotation of the term.

IV

APPRECIATING HUMOR

THOSE readers or listeners whose appreciation of humorous scenes or speeches is keen by nature will not need any special suggestions along this line. And those who are wholly devoid of this appreciation cannot expect to be taught. There are, however, many readers whose ordinary power to see the humor in the lines may be developed. Parents and teachers can, moreover, create a common desire to linger over the humorous scenes, and by a common infection increase the enjoyment of each member of the group.

Moreover, it is unquestionably true that many need to be told quite sharply that certain situations at which they laugh are really not funny at all. People of a far-past generation used to laugh when dogs or cats or bears or any animals were the victims of practices that inflicted pain and produced yelps and yowls and roars. Even yet there are moving-picture producers who seem to regard the act of throwing a piece of custard pie at an innocent

bystander as the very quintessence of things humorous, and therefore worthy the tributes of loud laughter and unrestrained applause.

Those who read the plays of this volume will find here nothing that smacks of such horseplay. They will, however, find plenty of good farce. Even in such a serious play as *What Men Live By* there are flitting sheens of the author's gentle satiric fun. The widow Anna Maloska is seen, in her determined search for a husband, interpreting Martin's abstract and far-off remarks about marriage as a near approach to a proposal. When, some time later, Martin has finally agreed to marry her, she decides that her next pair of shoes shall be good and comfortable — instead of sixes she orders number nines. And she is looking amiably forward to the time when she can go to breakfast in an old wrapper and curl-papers. Humorous touches such as these will prove more permanently satisfying than those examples of broad farce and cheap incident that among the uneducated produce hoarse laughter and loud guffaws.

V

THE ATMOSPHERE OF A PLAY

WHEN we consider the various elements that build up the connotation of the term "reading," we include one which is somewhat intangible and which we rather vaguely designate as *atmosphere*. It is something which produces a distinct effect, but which is difficult to define. We are conscious, when we come to make comparisons, that many other things beside plays possess atmosphere. We feel it when we step into a church, or a school, or a home, or a business office. It lingers about college halls and helps to give them character and distinction. It is the aura

which surrounds every strong personality and tends to make us seek or evade his presence. The atmosphere of a play is sometimes chiefly created by the setting of the scene, as in Percy MacKaye's *Kinfolk of Robin Hood*. It may be produced by the clash and menace of great historical turmoil, as in John Farrar's *Nerves*. In Miss Field's *The Fifteenth Candle*, we feel the pressing claims of child-labor in conflict with the higher idealism of art.

In Tolstoi's *What Men Live By* we have an interesting example of the atmosphere changing as the play progresses. In the beginning we are depressed by the air of grinding poverty that keeps the cobbler and his wife in continual anxiety. It infects the home and induces a note of querulousness and suspicion. But gradually this fetid air is dispelled by the purifying influence of Michael and his divinity. After a year all trace of the former infection is lost; we breathe the atmosphere of the restored angel whose mysterious presence has wrought the wondrous change. Into the darkness of the silent room there finally bursts the "great choir of voices, and in the doorway Michael, bathed in light, stands looking upward." And this is the atmosphere out of which we must emerge when we finish the reading of this mystery-laden play.

VI

THE PLOT OF THE PLAY

INTO the finer technique and niceties of plot-construction it is not now necessary or desirable that we should enter. As readers of plays, we note the situation at the beginning, follow the action up to and away from the point of highest interest, and finally watch the characters end their play. And we do this without much thought about methods of plot-development.

In thinking of simple plot-structure I have recalled an old farmyard story. In the crowded corral were live stock of varied kinds, all quiet and peaceful. A sleeping pig, disturbed by a fly, kicked out his hind foot somewhat viciously and struck a calf standing innocently near. The calf responded with an equally vicious kick and unfortunately hit a mule that responded with both feet, as mules frequently do. Instantly the whole barnyard was in angry turmoil and one disaster followed another in reckless disorder. The excitement died down only when the farmer opened the gate and drove all the animals into a large field, where conditions were more favorable to the peace that finally ensued.

Something of this sort always happens in plots. Things are quiescent. Somebody or something disturbs the quiet, and moods — angry, joyous, jealous, suspicious — are aroused. The changed situations and moods come to a height of interest — it may be comedy, it may be tragedy — and then, gradually or suddenly, fall again into a quiet plane. Plot-interest in plays lies in simply following the course of events that compose a dramatic art unit.

Of course the study and analysis of the methods used by the writer are always interesting. To what degree is the trend of the story determined by one peculiar temperament coming by chance into the congenial, or uncongenial, presence of another? Or how much is due to mere situation, the characters being neutral, unindividualized? Or how much influence does the historical situation or atmosphere exert? Is the playwright skillful in explaining quickly and clearly the relationship of one character to another? Does he manage his entrances and exits so that they seem natural — motivated by the characters themselves? Or, on the other hand, do they seem to be made

simply to suit the whim or the convenience or the momentary need of the dramatist? Apply these questions first to *What Men Live By* and then compare the skill of the other playwrights with Tolstoi's skill in this particular.

VII

THE ACTING OF PLAYS

WHILE emphasis in the preceding part of this Introduction has fallen upon the reading of plays, no one need infer that dramatic production is to be discouraged. We all know how enthusiastically pupils undertake projects of this sort, and we know, too, that competent guidance produces most beneficial results. The acting of many of these plays by the pupils who read them may therefore be regarded as merely amplifying the reading-idea and offering fuller scope for complete interpretation.

Just how elaborate the production should be will depend upon local conditions. In many cases a recitation room or the living-room in a home may be chosen and the lines read by individuals to whom they have previously been assigned. Each reader will attempt by voice and action to enter so completely into the situation of the character he represents that he will create in the presence of actors and audience a sense of reality and naturalness. In such a method each actor will of course be somewhat hampered. One of his hands must hold his book, and his eyes must, for the most part, be fixed on the printed lines. His interpretative actions are thus restricted and his opportunity for facial expression reduced. Moreover, the mere psychology of the situation makes it difficult for any actor to enter so unreservedly into his character as to create that complete sense of illusion so important

in dramatic work. And yet, in many individual cases, we have all been impressed by the marked success of this very simple method.

Where there is time for pupils to memorize their parts, many of the hampering effects of such a method are obviated. As young people readily enter into this work of memorizing and are willing — even anxious — to undertake it out of school hours, teachers and parents will of course encourage it, knowing that it has great educational value. When the parts have been thoroughly committed it is interesting to note the improvement over the former reading, even with no attempt at staging and costuming. Freed from the mere mechanics of following the printed page, the pupil can more unreservedly and more convincingly express himself.

But anyone who has had experience in teaching the modern drama has early learned that no normal group is content with anything quite so partial as the methods I have just outlined. Frequent attendance at the theatre and moving-picture shows has combined with an inborn acting-tendency to create in the imagination of most young people a definite conception of the exact way in which a given play could be adequately presented on the stage. And there is, in most of them, a natural yearning for full and complete dramatic expression, with all that this demands in properties, management, stage-carpentry, scene-shifting, lighting-devices, costuming, “make up,” voice-effects, and team play. There are, moreover, many activities related to these in which the less dramatically gifted may engage, such as press advertising, poster-making, ticket-vending, electric wiring, and general utility service.

No teacher should enter into this design without a preconception of its cost in money, time, and nerve

force. It requires careful planning, rigid discipline, and ability to placate sensitive temperaments. But one or two performances a year are of tremendous value both to the pupils engaged and to the institution as a whole. The educational values of a competently directed project of this sort are priceless. It develops ease in manner, grace in movement, effective voice-control, and all those elements that enhance the value of the actor's art. It offers opportunity for the development of sympathy, emotion, and humor. It creates a sense of personal responsibility and group coöperation, for in all its ramifications it offers opportunity for many varied aptitudes.¹

VIII

THE WRITING OF PLAYS

THE study of the modern drama, with its emphasis upon interpretative reading and acting, has in many schools bred a desire among students to attempt original creative work. They see in the shorter one-act plays, such as *Nerves* or *The Fifteenth Candle*, that many current situations may be as easily and effectively set forth in dramatic form as in the form of the short story. For after all, a play is — when reduced to its simplest terms — merely a situation, dialogue, and action. When these are clearly conceived in the imagination and so arranged as to make an effective design, with proper attention to the beginning, middle, and end, we may have a successful play. Of course there are many degrees of nicety and perfection, and our early attempts may be

¹ As anyone unfamiliar with the details of play-production will desire far more detailed information than space here allows, I am listing on pages 315–320 the titles of books that will prove valuable for study and reference.

crude and worthless. But this is likely to be true in the pursuit of any art. Our efforts, if they accomplish nothing else, will make us more appreciative of the success which other students have attained in those realms in which we have at least virtue enough to develop an ambition to accomplish creative and individual work.

The ordinary student will perhaps see in the plays of this volume goals so far distant that they do not invite immediate conquest. I am therefore printing here, as a mark of easier amateur attainment, a little play that was written by a high-school girl who had received her inspiration to write while studying, with other members of her class, *The Atlantic Book of Modern Plays* under the stimulating leadership of Miss Rennie Peele of the Goldsboro (N. C.) High School. The young author was wise in selecting her characters and her situations from an environment with which she was perfectly familiar. The ungrammatical forms here employed are, I am told, quite realistic. Indeed, the play reads as if it were a transcript from the actual. The play is here reprinted through the courtesy of Miss Peele and the author.

ON SHORE

ANDRINA MC INTYRE

SCENE: *The "parlor" of the Shine home in a town in eastern North Carolina. Everywhere there are evidences of money spent lavishly and ignorantly. There is in the corner at the right a self-player piano, in the centre back a settee, and at the left two glass-doored bookcases that contain no books. At the left there are chairs and a table that has a white crocheted centrepiece on it. When the curtain rises MARY SHINE and her mother are sitting, Mary on the settee, MRS. SHINE in a rocker. Mrs. Shine is tatting. "MARTHY" and FLORENCE, Mary's two younger sisters, about twelve and nine respectively, are sitting on the floor, supposedly studying.*

MARTHA (*chanting in a singsong way*). Sister 's got a beau, sister 's got a beau; his name is William Moore, his name is William Moore. Sister 's got a beau, sister 's got a —

MRS. SHINE. Hush, Marthy! Act like y' ain't got no sense. A body 'd think to hear you talk that Mary never had had no dates before.

MARTHA. Well, she ain't had one with William in two years. Seems like longer 'n that. I 've most forgot what he looks like. All I know is, sister likes him better 'n any th' other boys she is gone with. She 's kept all his letters put away with a set of emblems and some more things he gave her, though she don't let Kathleen Stewart know nothing 'bout it — not since that day Kathleen laughed at the spellin' and grammar in the one sister showed her.

MARY. Shut up, Marthy. Your mouth 's so big you 'll stumble and fall in it some day if you don't watch out.

FLORENCE (*who has skipped to the window*). I see him! He 's comin'! Come here, Marthy! O-oo, look, what funny pants! They 're all baggy at the bottom like skirts. Maybe William 's turned sissy since he joined the navy, sister.

MRS. SHINE. You children get out o' here! Scoot, now! Mary don't want you hangin' round when William comes. (*The children start reluctantly, but hurry out as the idea strikes them that they will be able to answer the bell.*) I 'm goin' too, Mary, I reckon you 'd ruther be alone when you meet him. He 's a good steady boy, and though I don't want to rush you, Mary, you 're goin' on nineteen now and I was married when I was two years younger 'n you. We ain't never had no old maids in the family yet, an' it ain't likely that a good-looking girl like you 'll be the first. (*She hears William coming and makes a hasty exit at door left. A second or two later WILLIAM enters at right. He is a good steady-looking sailor, not over-brilliant, but with plenty of common-sense. He is a little awed by the splendor of the Shine parlor. The last time he saw Mary was in a little country village, before her father made money in tobacco. He hesitates just inside the door.*)

WILLIAM. Mary, hon'! You 've changed so I did n't hardly know you.

MARY. William! (*She comes to meet him and they shake hands; then they go and sit together on settee.*)

WILLIAM. Are your folks well? How 's your mother? I ain't heard how she was since she was sick.

MARY. Mammy 's all right, I reckon. Well, tell me about yourself. Are you home for good?

WILLIAM. There ain't much to tell. I 've served my time out now; and I can stay here, or sign up again if I want to. I 've got a fair chance at promotion if I go back, but a sailor's life is no life for a married man. If you say so, Mary, I won't go back. I know you promised to marry me before I left, but that was before your pa made so much money. (*Looks round the room wistfully.*) I would n't be able to give you all these kind of things, Mary; but if you want to marry me I reckon we 'll get along. If you feel as how you can't, I ain't the man to hold you to your spoken word. How about it, Mary — shall I sign up again or not?

MARY. Oh, I don't know. I ain't had time to think. I —

MARTHA (*sticking her head in through door at right*). Sister, Kathleen's here. She came for you to go to the Library with her.

MARY. Kathleen? Oh my! All right, bring her in here, Marthy.

(*She stands up nervously, as Martha ushers in KATHLEEN, a good-looking girl who is manifestly of a different class from the Shines. It is now seen that she is Mary's model. Mary's hair is done as much like Kathleen's as possible, and she has caught one or two little mannerisms of Kathleen's.*)

MARY. Mr. Moore, meet Miss Stewart.

KATHLEEN (*bowing*). Mr. Moore.

WILLIAM (*starts toward her to shake hands, but as she merely bows, he stops awkwardly*). Pleased to meet you.

KATHLEEN. I just ran in to see if you wanted to go to the Library. I 've just finished this book, *The Story of Mankind*. (*Faint amusement in her glance, which is not lost on Mary.*) What do you think of the modern theory of evolution, Mr. Moore?

WILLIAM (*ill at ease*). Why, I did n't know there was no new theory about the revolution. When I went to school they learned me that George Washington started the only revolution that was a revolution. I ain't heard tell of no new one.

KATHLEEN (*suppressing a smile*). Oh, I mean the Darwinian theory — the theory that men are descended from monkeys, you know.

WILLIAM (*still not understanding her*). Er— yes 'm. Mary, are you-all going to the Liberry? Don't stay on account of me.

KATHLEEN. Oh, no, we are n't going now. We can go any time. I must be leaving. Mary, is this the young gentleman whose letter you showed me the other day?

MARY. Yes — er — (*She is quite flustered.*)

KATHLEEN. Well, so long. See you later.

(*She goes out at right.*)

WILLIAM. Is that the kind of girl you been goin' with? No wonder I felt like I did n't know you. Well, Mary, what is it, "yes" or "no"?

MARY (*petulantly*). Oh, for goodness' sakes! Can't you think of nothin' but gettin' married all the time? I should think it 'd do you more good to put your mind on a little book learnin' instead.

WILLIAM. Oh, so that 's it, eh? I thought somethin' was wrong from the first, but I could n't rightly tell what it was. You 've outgrown me. You 'd ruther go to the Liberry with that girl once a month than to be married to me. Well, I won't hinder you none. No, I won't hinder you none. (*Looks at his watch.*) There 's a train back to Norfolk in thirty minutes. I can sign up and get back my old place, I reckon. There don't seem to be any place here for me. Good-bye, Mary; I 'll sign up for five years this time, I reckon.

(*He looks at her wistfully for some sign, but she maintains a strong silence. He goes out right, his shoulders drooped a little, but otherwise he gives no sign of what he is feeling. MARY watches him out and then drops dazedly into a chair, and stares into space as the curtain descends.*)

The following brief poetic dialogue, *The Secrets of the Heart*, by Austin Dobson, while even slighter in concept than *On Shore*, is of course much more difficult to execute. It will, however, help students to realize how multitudinous are the situations that lend themselves to dramatic composition and how skillfully these can be elaborated into dramatic form. We simply need to cultivate the eye that can see, the soul that can feel, the mind that can invent, and the will that can execute.

THE SECRETS OF THE HEART¹

AUSTIN DOBSON

SCENE: *A chalet covered with honeysuckle.*

NINETTE

NINON

NINETTE

This way —

NINON

No, this way —

NINETTE

This way, then.

(They enter the Chalet.)

You are as changing, Child — as Men.

NINON

But are they? Is it true, I mean?

Who said it?

NINETTE

Sister Séraphine.

She was so pious and so good,

With such sad eyes beneath her hood,

¹ From *Proverbs in Porcelain*, reprinted by permission of Mr. Humphrey Milford, Publisher (the Oxford University Press), and Mr. A. T. A. Dobson.

And such poor little feet — all bare!
 Her name was Eugénie La Fere.
 She used to tell us, — moonlight nights, —
 When I was at the Carmelites.

NINON

Ah, then it must be right. And yet,
 Suppose for once — suppose, Ninette —

NINETTE

But what?

NINON

Suppose it were not so?
 Suppose there *were* true men, you know!

NINETTE

And then?

NINON

Why — if that could occur,
 What kind of man should you prefer?

NINETTE

What looks, you mean?

NINON

Looks, voice and all.

NINETTE

Well, as to that, he must be tall,
 Or say, not “tall” — of middle size;
 And next, he must have laughing eyes,
 And a hook-nose — with, underneath,
 Oh, what a row of sparkling teeth!

NINON (*touching her cheek suspiciously*)

Has he a scar on this side?

NINETTE

Hush!

Someone is coming. No, a thrush;
 I see it swinging there.

NINON

Go on.

NINETTE

Then he must fence (ah, look, 't is gone!),
And dance like Monseigneur, and sing
"Love was a Shepherd" — everything
That men do. Tell me yours, Ninon.

NINON

Shall I? Then mine has black, black hair —
I mean he *should* have; then an air
Half-sad, half-noble; features thin;
A little "royale" on the chin;
And such a pale, high brow. And then,
He is a prince of gentlemen —
He, too, can ride, and fence, and write
Sonnets and madrigals, yet fight
No worse for that—

NINETTE

I know your man.

NINON

And I know yours. But you 'll not tell —
Swear it!

NINETTE

I swear upon this fan,
My grandmother's!

NINON

And I, I swear
On this old turquoise reliquaire,
My great-great-grandmother's! —

(*After a pause*)

Ninette!

I feel *so* sad.

NINETTE

I, too. But why?

NINON

Alas, I know not!

NINETTE (*with a sigh*)

Nor do I.

THE ATLANTIC BOOK
OF
JUNIOR PLAYS

WHAT MEN LIVE BY

An Adaptation of the Story by Leo Tolstoi¹

VIRGINIA CHURCH

CHARACTERS

SIMON, the cobbler

MATRENA, his wife

MICHAEL, his apprentice

BARON AVEDEITCH, a wealthy landowner

THEDKA, his footman

SONIA IVANICH, a lady of means

BRENIE } Her two adopted children, little girls of about

NIKITA } six years

ANNA MALOSKA, a widow, friend of Matrena

TROFINOFF, a debtor

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

A LITTLE DEVIL

About four feet below the level of the street, which is reached by a few stairs at the back leading to an outer door, is the basement occupied by SIMON. At the right of the door, on a line with the pavement, is a long narrow

¹ Permission to use this story as the basis for the play was obtained from E. P. Dutton and Company, publishers of Everyman's Library, in which the original translation appeared. The play is here reprinted with the consent of Miss Church and of *The Drama*, in which it originally appeared. For permission to produce, address Miss Church in care of *The Drama*, 59 East Van Buren Street, Chicago, Illinois. There is a royalty of \$10.

window through which one may see the feet of the passers-by. Simon, who does most of the cobbling for the village, knows the wayfarers by the boots which he has repaired. Under the window, placed so as to catch the meagre light, is a cobbler's bench with tools on either side. At the left of the stairs are long gray curtains forming a kind of closet in which outer wraps are hung. In the corner is a small china-closet. In the left wall is a hearth; here, over the fire, the wife cooks the meals. Two old chairs huddle near the fire as if for warmth. A table, half concealed by a worn cloth, stands near the fireplace. Opposite the fireplace is a door leading into the inner room.

SCENE I

SIMON, *old, slow in movement, kindly of feature, is seated at his bench, mending a pair of rough hide shoes. His wife, MATRENA, as brown and dry as a chip, is on a stool by the fire, mending a tattered old sheepskin outer coat. Occasionally one sees the feet of pedestrians pass by the little window. SIMON glances up as they throw a shadow on his table.*

MATRENA. And who was that went by, Simon?

SIMON. It was Thedka, my dear Matrena. Thedka, the footman of the Barina. The side-patch on his boot has lasted well.

MATRENA. Yes, you make them last for so long that they do not need to come to you and so you have little trade.

SIMON. But, Matrena, I could not put on patches that would not last; then I should have no trade at all. I must do my best. That is the kind of man I am.

MATRENA. Yes, yes, Simon, that is the kind of man

you are and so this is the kind of home we have, with hardly enough flour in the bin for one baking.

SIMON. Don't fret, Matrena. We shall not starve. God is good.

MATRENA. Aye, God is good, but his handmen are far from the likeness in which He cast them. (*A girl trips by.*) Was that Rozinka went by?

SIMON. No, Rozinka has not such high heels. It was Ulka, the Barina's maid.

MATRENA. I might have guessed it, after Thedka had passed. The minx is as hard on his footsteps as a man's shadow on a sunny day. It's a pity, since you shoe all the servants in the Baron's household, that the master would not let you make boots for him.

SIMON. The boots of the nobilities are brought from Paris, and are cut from northern leather. Trofinoff told me he brought five pair from the station on his last trip.

MATRENA. Trofinoff, hm! Did you not tell me Trofinoff promised to come this afternoon to pay the eight roubles he has owed you three years coming Michaelmas?

SIMON. Aye, so he said.

MATRENA. So he said, but I'll warrant we never see a hair of his beard till he's come barefoot again. Now (*holding up the sheepskin*), I've done all I can to your sheepskin. It's so thin the cold does n't have to seek the holes to creep in: it walks through. It's thankful I'll be when we can buy another skin so that I can get out of the house the same time you go.

SIMON. We'll buy a skin this very afternoon, my dear. When Trofinoff brings me the eight roubles, we shall add it to the three you have saved, and that ought to buy a good skin — if not a tanned one, at all events, a good rough one.

MATRENA. *If Trofinoff brings the money.*

SIMON. He 'll bring it, or, by heaven, I' ll have the cap off his head, so I will. That is the kind of man I am.

MATRENA. If he were to come in and tell you he is hard up, you would tell him not to worry his head about the roubles, that God is good.

SIMON. No, I shall say, "Am I not hard up as well?"

MATRENA. Very well, if he comes we shall see what kind of man you are. Who was that?

SIMON. It was your friend, Anna Maloska, who wears shoes too small for her.

MATRENA. She wore large shoes after she caught her husband; but now he is dead, she wears small shoes again to catch another.

SIMON. I wonder that she did not stop.

MATRENA. She will stop on her way back from market, for there will be more news.

SIMON (*looking out the window and rising happily*). But see here, Matrena, you wronged the good Trofinoff. He has come to pay the eight roubles, as he promised. (*There is a halting knock at the door.*) Coming! Coming! (*He limps slightly as he hastens up the steps.*)

MATRENA (*as she crosses to go into the room at the right*). Well, Simon, I shall be the last to be sorry if your faith has been rewarded. (*She goes out as SIMON opens the door to the street. He comes down with TROFINOFF, a middle-aged, sharp-faced little man with gray beard and keen, roving eyes. He carries a bundle wrapped in brown cloth.*)

SIMON. Welcome, Trofinoff. I salute you.

TROFINOFF. Welcome, fellow brother. I wish you everything that is good.

SIMON. I thank you, brother. Is all well at home?

TROFINOFF. Not as well as might be, alas! Fuel takes much money these days. I have a flat purse.

SIMON. Then it was doubly good of you, friend Trofinoff, to come to settle our account. My good wife has not a kaftan or a sheepskin to wear when it snows.

TROFINOFF. I regret, Simon, I was unable to bring you the roubles I owe you. I am so hard pressed.

SIMON (*with forced sternness*). Am I not hard up as well?

TROFINOFF. Aye, but you have not so many mouths to fill, nor cattle to feed, nor grain to dispose of with little profit.

SIMON. Friend Trofinoff, you have a hut and cattle, while I have all on my back. You grow your own bread; I have to buy mine. If you do not pay me, I shall not have money for bread.

TROFINOFF. You are not so grieved as I, brother; and had it been any one but you I should not have dared face him, but I knew the kind of man you are. I have heard you say, "Let us love one another."

SIMON. That is so, for love is of God.

TROFINOFF. So I said to my wife: "Anya, if it were anyone but Simon, the good Simon, I would not dare take him our little one's shoes, but I know what kind of man he is: he loves the children and would not that the least of these should suffer and he could help it."

(*He unwraps a tattered pair of shoes, belonging to a child.*)

SIMON. Aye, the little Sarah's shoes. They need soles badly, and a toe-cap.

TROFINOFF. You will repair them for her, Simon?

SIMON. Of course, brother, I — (*He looks nervously toward the door to the inner room.*) Could you not pay me something, Trofinoff?

TROFINOFF. Here are two copecks. They will buy a half loaf for the wife, Simon. (*He goes to the door.*)

SIMON. Thank you.

TROFINOFF. And you shall have your roubles in a day or so — as soon as my grain is paid for.

SIMON. I can get along very comfortably. While one of us has a warm coat, why should we fret? I can stay in by the fire. Only, of course, there's my wife. She keeps worrying about it.

TROFINOFF. Your wife has no cause to be anxious while she has such a kind husband, Simon. I will send for the boots shortly. Good day.

SIMON. Good day. God be with you, brother!

(TROFINOFF goes out. SIMON lays the copecks on the bench, and is examining the small shoes when MATRENA enters. He puts them behind his back guiltily.)

MATRENA. Well, what are you hiding there? Did he bring you a gift with your money?

SIMON (*sadly*). No, he — he assured me, he was quite destitute.

MATRENA (*enraged*). Do you mean he brought you not even your eight roubles? (SIMON *shakes his head*.) What did I tell you, eh?

SIMON. But he says he will bring them soon — when his money comes in. I railed at him, Matrena. I scored him roundly for not paying his just dues.

MATRENA. And what have you there? (SIMON *produces the shoes* and MATRENA is further enraged.) I thought as much. You've taken more work for the cheater. You let him hoodwink you out of your senses while your old wife may go hungry and cold? What's this?

SIMON. He gave me two copecks for bread.

(MATRENA *hurls them angrily on the floor* at SIMON's feet. The old man *patiently picks them up*.)

MATRENA. Bread, bah! It would not buy half a loaf. The thief! It is a shame, a shame! (*She rocks herself, crying, then falls into a chair by the fire, her apron thrown over her head, and gives way to grief.*)

SIMON (*distressed*). Come now, Matrena, why will you wag your tongue so foolishly? If we have bread for the day, the morrow will provide for itself. As for the coat, I shall go to Vanya, the vender of skins, and get one on credit.

(*The LITTLE DEVIL peers in at the window, then disappears.*)

MATRENA. And who would give the likes of us credit with not a dessiatine of land to our share?

SIMON (*putting the shoes on the bench and preparing for outdoors*). Vanya will. I have bought many skins from him for my shoes. I have favored him in his turn.

MATRENA. Men forget past favors in the face of present desires. But if you are going out, you had better put my woollen jacket under your kaftan. The wind is bitter cold to-day.

(*She goes to the curtains to the left of the stairs and takes down a close-fitting woollen sack. From a shelf of the cupboard she lifts a jar and shakes into her hand some money. SIMON is drawing on woollen slippers over his shoes. He puts on MATRENA'S jacket, a woollen kaftan or smock over it, and throws the sheep-skin about his shoulders. On his bald head he draws down a fur cap.*)

SIMON (*submitting to MATRENA'S ministrations*). Thank you, Matrena, I shall feel quite warm in this old sheep-skin. I sha' n't want a new one in a lifetime.

(*He goes up the steps.*)

MATRENA. You won't get one, the way you conduct your business. Now, Simon, here are our three roubles;

give these to Vanya on account and he should then let you have the skin.

SIMON. He will, wife, he will.

MATRENA. Now go, and mind you do not stop for vodka on the way — your tongue is loose enough as it is. And do not talk aloud to yourself, as is your custom, for if a thief learn you have the roubles, he will not be above killing you for them.

SIMON. God is my protection. May his good angel guard our house in my absence! Good day, Matrena!

MATRENA. Good day, Simon!

(He goes out, closing the door. She looks after him affectionately, then goes to the closet and taking an iron pot from the shelf, hangs it before the fire. Seeing that all is well, she crosses and goes into the inner room. The basement is but dimly lighted. The LITTLE DEVIL, after peering through the window to see that the coast is clear, comes in from the street, closing the door after him. He moves quickly and is merry, as if about to reap some reward for his efforts. From out the curtains, by the stairs, steps the figure of the GUARDIAN ANGEL in long, flowing garments. The ANGEL remains in the shadows and is never clearly visible.)

ANGEL. Why are you here?

(The DEVIL goes to the hearth and sits in front of the fire. He shows no surprise at being spoken to by the ANGEL, and does not look in his direction.)

DEVIL. To try my luck to see if I can win old Simon with my dice. He has begun to ask credit, and if he stop for vodka, as I shall see that he does, that will be one more step in my direction.

ANGEL. His faith is strong.

DEVIL. So are my dice, ha! ha! *(He throws them.)*

Three, six, nine! Good! The three means that he will have a little luck; it will make him drink vodka and forget his wife. Six, he will prosper, and when a man prospers in *this* world he forgets the next. Nine, nine, that is not so well. Nine means that I shall get him — if — yet “if’s” are so little in my way. So I shall get him, unless —

ANGEL. Unless?

DEVIL (*rising*). Unless a greater than thou come into his home to protect him.

ANGEL. I am his Guardian Angel.

DEVIL (*on the stairs*). I will make the roubles jingle in his pockets so that he shall not hear the voice of the Guardian Angel. If nine had been twelve — but we shall see. I am off now to the home of the Baron, who long ago drowned the voice of his angel in vodka. I mixed his first glass. There was fox’s blood to make him grow cunning, wolf’s blood to make him grow cruel, and swine’s blood to turn him into a pig. On my way, I shall mix a glass for Simon, to bring up in him all the beast-blood there is.

ANGEL. His faith is great.

(*The DEVIL laughs derisively as he goes out and slams the door, and the ANGEL disappears again in the shadows. Feet go by the window and voices are heard. Then, just as MATRENA comes in and goes to the fire, there is a knock.*)

MATRENA. Come in.

(*A comely woman of middle age enters. She is rather overdressed in poor clothes that strive to imitate the rich. It is ANNA MALOSKA.*)

MATRENA. Ah, Anna, is it you? I thought I smelled smoke and came to tend our fire. Come in.

ANNA (*sniffing*). It smells like sulphur. That’s bad luck. Who was it went out?

MATRENA. No one. Sit down. Simon has gone to buy a sheepskin. Is it cold out?

ANNA (*sitting and throwing back her wraps*). Bitter cold. It was on just such a day my poor husband caught pneumonia.

MATRENA (*sitting on the other side of the fire and tending the porridge*). I do hope Simon won't catch cold and I do hope the sheepskin-seller won't cheat him. That man of mine is a regular simpleton.

ANNA (*patting her hair*). They all are, poor dears!

MATRENA. Simon never cheats a soul himself, yet a little child can lead him by the nose. It's time he was back; he had only a short way to go.

ANNA. If it were poor dear Ivan, I should know he had stopped for a glass of vodka.

MATRENA (*walking to the window and looking out*). I hope he has n't gone making merry, that rascal of mine.

ANNA. Ah, Matrena, they are all rascals. Ivan drank himself into a drunken stupor every evening; then he would come home and beat me, and beat little Fifi, my dog; but I have to remember that he was a man and men are like that. I shall never be happy again, now that he is in his grave. (*She weeps.*)

MATRENA (*patting her shoulder*). There, there, poor Anna!

ANNA (*brightening*). Do you like my hat?

MATRENA. Aye, aye, it is very tasty; though, if I might say, a trifle youthful.

ANNA. Why should n't a woman cheat Father Time if she can? He's the only man she can get even with. He liked my hat.

MATRENA. Ivan?

ANNA. Oh, no, the poor dear died without seeing it. I mean Martin Pakhom. I just met him at the door and

he said, "Good day, Anna, what a beautiful hat that is you 're wearing!"

MATRENA. They say Martin drinks like a trout.

ANNA. Ah, they all do, poor dears (*gathering up her basket*). I must go on. Fifi will be wanting his supper, though neither of us has eaten anything since poor Ivan died. Fifi is so affectionate. We both cry an hour every morning. Sonka times us.

MATRENA. Poor Anna!

ANNA. Won't you walk a way with me?

MATRENA. Simon went out with all our clothes upon him and left me nothing to wear. Besides, I must have his supper ready, and clean out my sleeping-room.

ANNA (*at the stairs*). I wish I had someone to get supper for. (*She goes up to the door.*) Matrena, Martin said something rather pointed just now.

MATRENA. What did he say, Anna?

ANNA. He said, "Marriage is a lottery!"

MATRENA. Aye, aye, so it is.

ANNA. I was just wondering —

MATRENA. Yes?

ANNA. I was wondering if Martin were thinking of taking a chance. Good-bye, Matrena.

MATRENA. Good-bye, Anna.

(ANNA goes out. MATRENA, stirring her porridge, sits near the fire. The feet of two men pass the window. They belong to SIMON and a stranger. The men enter. The stranger is a young man, tall and slender, with fine clear-cut features and a mild, gentle expression. He is without stockings, being clad in SIMON'S woollen slippers and kaftan. He stands hesitating at the foot of the steps. MATRENA has risen and regards the two men angrily. "What tramp is this now, Simon has brought home?" she is wondering.)

SIMON. Well, Matrena, here we are home again. (*The old man approaches his wife fearfully.* MATRENA, after a scathing glance, turns her back on him, and tends her fire.) We have brought our appetites with us. Get us some supper, will you? (*He takes off his sheepskin and cap, but still MATRENA does not respond. He motions the stranger to a chair at the right.*) Sit you down, brother, and we will have some supper. Have you anything cooked that you could give us?

MATRENA (*facing him in rage*). Yes, I have something cooked, but not for you. I can see you have drunk your senses away. (*He starts to protest.*) Do you think I cannot smell your breath? Where is our sheepskin? Did you drink up all the three roubles?

(SIMON goes to the stranger and reaching in the pocket of the kaftan, takes out the roubles.)

SIMON. No, Matrena, I did not get the sheepskin, because the vender would not let me have one unless I brought all the money. "Bring all the cash," he said, "and then you can pick what skin you like. We all of us know how difficult it is to get quit of a debt." But here are your roubles; I spent only the two copecks for the merest drop to send the blood bubbling finely in my veins.

MATRENA (*eyeing the man*). I have no supper for a pair of drunkards like you. One cannot feed every drunkard that comes along when one has not enough in the pot for two.

SIMON. Hold your tongue, Matrena. Give me time to explain.

MATRENA. How much sense am I likely to hear from a drunken fool, indeed! My mother gave me some linen — and you drank it away! You go out to buy a sheepskin and drink that away, too.

SIMON. But I did not —

MATRENA (*beside herself with rage*). Give me my jacket! It's the only one I have, yet you sneak it off while I stay home for lack of clothes. (*As she snatches off the jacket and starts to the other room, her anger is burning off.*) You — you haven't told me who this fellow is.

SIMON. If you will give me a chance for a word, I will. I saw this man lying by the chapel yonder, half naked and frozen. It is not summer time, you must remember. God led me to him, else he must have perished. The Baron Avedeitch drove up and I thought he would stop, but he did not. I started on, saying to myself the man could be up to no good there and if I went back I might be robbed and murdered. Then I said, "Fie, Simon, for shame! Would you let a man die at your very door for want of clothing and food?" What could I do? I shared with him my covering and brought him here. Calm your temper, Matrena, for to give way to it is sinful. Remember we would all die, were it not for God.

(MATRENA *turns back from the door, sets a teapot on the table and pours some kvass, laying knives and forks by the plates and serving the porridge.*)

MATRENA. Here is kvass and porridge. There is no bread. (*They eat humbly. MATRENA stops before the stranger.*) What is your name?

MICHAEL (*lifting his serious eyes to her face*). Michael.

MATRENA. Where do you come from?

MICHAEL. From another part than this.

MATRENA. How did you come to the chapel?

MICHAEL. I cannot say.

MATRENA. Someone must have assaulted you, then?

MICHAEL. No, no one assaulted me. God was punishing me.

SIMON. Of course, all things come from God. Yet where were you bound for?

MICHAEL. For nowhere in particular.

SIMON. Do you know any trade?

MICHAEL. No, none.

MATRENA (*her heart warming within her*). You could learn. I know, Simon, he could learn, if you would teach him. He might stay with us. There is enough straw for another bed in the hallway.

MICHAEL. The Lord be good to you! I was lying frozen and unclothed, when Simon saw and took compassion on me. He shared with me his clothing and brought me hither. You have given me food and drink and shown me great kindness.

MATRENA. No, I was not kind. I am ashamed of myself. (*She goes to the cupboard and brings out the one bit of bread.*) And I lied. I said there was no bread. There is one crust and you shall have half.

MICHAEL. But you?

MATRENA (*gently*). Eat, we shall have enough. You are welcome to stay with us as long as you wish. (*MICHAEL turns and smiles radiantly on her.*) Let us eat.

MICHAEL. God's blessing on this house!

SCENE II

There is an air of greater prosperity than before. The cobbler's bench is new. There are flowers in the window-box and on the mantel. It is spring outside. The sound of hammering is heard within. The outer door opens and MATRENA enters with ANNA MALOSKA. The women have been to market. MATRENA is well, though quietly dressed; ANNA, in bright colors.

MATRENA. Come in, Anna.

ANNA. The men are not here. I wished to ask Simon about my shoes.

MATRENA. They are inside, building another room. We have needed it since Michael came. Michael made the new bench.

ANNA. Michael seems to do everything well. Just like poor Ivan.

MATRENA (*enthusiastically*). Ah, he is wonderful! Everything that Simon teaches him he learns readily. The first day he learned to twine and twist the thread, — no easy task for the apprentice. The third day he was able to work as if he had been a cobbler all his life. He never makes mistakes, and he eats no more than a sparrow. (*They sit down at the table.*)

ANNA. He is woefully solemn.

MATRENA. Aye, he works all day, only resting for a moment to look upward. He never wishes to go out of doors; never jests, nor laughs. He has smiled only once: it was the night he came.

ANNA. Has he any family — a wife?

MATRENA. He never speaks of his own affairs.

ANNA. I should manage to worm it out of him, trust me. Martin shall have no secrets that I don't know.

MATRENA. When are you to marry, Anna?

ANNA. Next month. It will be such a relief to let down. I sha n't wear these tight stays any longer, nor such close boots. I can go to breakfast in my old wrapper and curl-papers. Now Martin has a way of dropping in to breakfast and I have to keep on my sleekest dress.

MATRENA. Martin was in for shoes last week.

ANNA. Yes, he says no one sews so strongly and so neatly as Michael.

MATRENA. People come to Simon from all the country

around. Since Michael came his business has increased tenfold.

ANNA. Aye, Martin says the fame of Simon's apprentice has crept abroad. (*Regarding her own shoes.*) Martin has small feet. He told me last night he wore a number seven. But I must go.

MATRENA. Here comes Simon now.

(SIMON and MICHAEL enter from the right. The latter is in simple workman's clothes. He bows gravely without speaking and going to the bench bends over his work. SIMON approaches the women, who have risen.)

SIMON. Ah, Anna Maloska, how fares the bride to-day?

ANNA. Well, thank you, Simon. I came to order some new shoes.

SIMON. Good, Anna. Shall we make them on the same last as before? Sixes, I believe?

ANNA. No, Simon, I wish sevens this time. Good-bye, Matrena. Good-bye, Simon.

SIMON and MATRENA. Farewell, Anna.

MATRENA. Come in again, Anna.

ANNA (*at the door*). Simon, are Martin's shoes finished?

SIMON. No, Anna, but don't worry; they will be. I had to send for more leather. He wears large boots, you know.

ANNA (*turning on the steps*). Large? Sevens?

SIMON. Elevens, Anna.

ANNA. Elevens — why — after all, Simon, I believe you may make my shoes nines. (*She opens the door.*)

SIMON. Very well, Anna.

ANNA (*looking out, becomes greatly excited*). Oh, Matrena, a fine gentleman in a greatcoat is getting out here. He has two coachmen and a footman. I think it is the Baron. I must run out of his way. (*She disappears.*)

SIMON and MATRENA together look out of the window.)

MATRENA. It is the Baron Avedeitch, is n't it, Simon?

SIMON. There is no mistaking the Baron, and he is coming here.

(The door has been left open and is presently filled by a huge form that has to bow his great head to enter the low portal. The BARON has a ruddy, bibulous countenance, a neck like a bull's, and a figure of cast iron. He straightens up just inside the door.)

BARON *(in a loud, pompous tone)*. Which of you is the master bootmaker?

SIMON *(stepping aside)*. I am, your honor.

BARON *(calling out the door)*. Hi, Thedka! Bring me the stuff here. *(He comes down into the room, followed by THEDKA, who places the bundle on the table.)* Untie it. *(The footman does so, disclosing two sheets of leather. He then withdraws. MATRENA curtsies every time anyone looks in her direction though no one heeds her.)* Look here, bootmaker. Do you see this?

SIMON. Yes, your nobility.

BARON. Do you know what it is?

SIMON. It is good leather.

BARON *(thundering for emphasis)*. Good leather, indeed! You blockhead, you have never seen such leather in your life before. It is of northern make and cost twenty roubles. Could you make me a pair of boots out of it?

SIMON. Possibly so, your honor.

BARON. "Possibly so!" Well, first, listen. I want a pair of boots that shall last a year, will never tread over, and never split at the seams. If you can make such boots, then set to work and cut out at once; but if you cannot, do neither of these things. I tell you beforehand that if the new pair should split or tread over before the year is out, I will clap you in prison.

MATRENA. Oh, your honor!

BARON (*ignoring her*). But, if they should not do so, then I will pay you ten roubles for your work.

SIMON (*turning to MICHAEL*). What do you think about it, brother?

MICHAEL. Take the work, Simon.

SIMON. Very well, sir.

BARON (*he sits and extends his foot*). Hi — Thedka. (*THEDKA advances and draws off the boot. The BARON then motions to SIMON. MICHAEL has advanced.*)

BARON. Take my measure. (*MICHAEL kneels and takes the measure of the sole and of the instep. He has to fasten on an extra piece of paper to measure the calf, as the muscles of the BARON'S leg are as thick as a beam.*) Take care you don't make them too tight in the leg. (*As MICHAEL draws back, THEDKA replaces the boot on his master's foot, then withdraws again to the door.*)

BARON (*indicating MICHAEL*). Who is this you have with you?

SIMON. That is my skilled workman who will sew your boots.

BARON (*standing and stamping into his boot*). Look you sharp, then, and remember this — that you are to sew them so that they will last a year. (*MICHAEL does not respond but stands gazing past the BARON as though he saw someone back of him. His face suddenly breaks into a smile and he brightens all over. The BARON, irritated, glances back of him, then scowls at MICHAEL.*) What are you grinning at, you fool? I see no one back of me to grin at. You had better see that the boots are ready when I want them. (*He stalks up the steps.*)

MICHAEL. They will be ready when you need them.

(*The BARON goes out. THEDKA follows, closing the door.*)

MATRENA. What a man!

SIMON. He is as hard as a flint stone.

MATRENA. Why would n't he get hardened with the life he leads? Even death itself would not take such an iron rivet of a man.

SIMON (*taking the leather to MICHAEL at the bench*). Well, Michael, we have undertaken the work and we must not go amiss over it. This leather is valuable stuff.

MATRENA. And the gentleman is short-tempered.

SIMON. Aye, there must be no mistakes. You have the sharper eyes, as well as the greater skill in your fingers, so take these measures and cut out the stuff, while I finish sewing those toe-caps.

MICHAEL. I will make them according to your needs.

(*The men sit working while MATRENA busies herself with the housework.*)

MATRENA. Oh, Simon, I forgot to tell you, Sonia Ivanich is coming by to get shoes for her two little girls. The little Nikita is hard to fit, but Madame has heard that Michael can fit even a lame foot.

(*MICHAEL drops his work and leans forward.*)

MICHAEL. A lame child?

MATRENA. Yes, poor little thing — but hush, I hear the clamp, clamp of a wooden foot. Come, Simon, and greet her. Madame has money; you are getting all the best trade now.

(*SIMON puts down his work and comes forward.*

MATRENA *hastens up to the door and holds it open. A gentle, good-looking lady enters with NIKITA and BRENIE, two pretty little girls. They have round wide eyes, rosy cheeks, and wear smart little shawls and dresses.*)

SONIA. Good day to you, mistress.

MATRENA. The same to you, madame, and the young misses. Won't you sit down?

(SONIA sits by the table, the two little girls burying their faces in her skirt from timidity. She pats them tolerantly. MICHAEL keeps regarding them, though he works.)

SONIA. Thank you. Is this Master Simon?

SIMON. It is, mistress. What can we do for you?

SONIA. I wish a pair of boots made for each of these little girls to wear for the spring.

SIMON. Very well, madame. Will you have them leather throughout or lined with linen?

SONIA. I believe linen will be softer. (*Lame NIKITA has slipped over to MICHAEL and he takes her on his knee.*) Well, will you see Nikita? I have never known her to take to a stranger so.

MATRENA. All the children love Michael. He is Simon's skilled workman. He will take the measures. (*MICHAEL measures the little feet. NIKITA pats his head.*)

NIKITA. I love you. Have you a little girl?

MICHAEL (*gently*). No, I have no little girl.

SONIA. Take both sets of measures from this little girl and make one *baskmak* for the crooked foot and three ordinary ones. The two children take the same size: they are twins.

MATRENA. How came she to be lame? Such a pretty little lady.

SONIA. Her mother, when dying, fell over her.

MATRENA (*surprised*). Then you are not their mother.

SONIA. No, I adopted them. But I love them as much as though they were my own, and they are as happy as the day is long; they know no difference.

SIMON. Whose children were they?

SONIA. The children of peasants. The father died on a Tuesday from the felling of a tree. The mother died that Friday, just after the twins were born. She was all alone, and in her death agony she threw herself across the baby and crushed its foot. When we found her, she was stiff in death, but the children were alive.

MATRENA. Poor little mother!

SONIA. I was the only one in the village with a young child, so they were given to me to nurse. God took my own little one unto Himself, but I have come to love these like my own flesh. I could not live without them. They are to me as wax is to the candle.

SIMON. It is a true saying which reads, "Without father and mother we may live, but without God — never."

(All are drawn to look at MICHAEL who, sitting with his hands folded on his knees, is gazing upward and smiling as though at someone unseen by the others.)

SONIA *(rising)*. Good day, master! Come, Nikita, we shall stop in again to try the boots.

SIMON. In seven days, mistress. We thank you.

NIKITA. Good-bye, man!

MICHAEL. Good-bye, little one!

SONIA. Well, I never! The little dear!

(She goes out with the children.)

SIMON. Michael, if you will bring me the awl from the other room, I, too, will work.

(He approaches the bench as MICHAEL goes into the other room for the awl. He suddenly cries aloud in dismay.) What has he done? What can ail the fellow?

MATRENA. What is it? *(She hastens to his side.)*

SIMON *(groaning)*. Oh! How is it that Michael, who has lived with me for a whole year without making a single

mistake, should now make such a blunder as this? The Baron ordered high boots and Michael has gone and sewn a pair of soleless slippers and spoiled the leather.

MATRENA (*aghast*). Michael has done this!

SIMON. Alas! yes, and you heard what the gentleman said. I could replace an ordinary skin, but one does not see leather like this every day. (*MICHAEL returns with the awl.*) My good fellow, what have you done? You have simply ruined me! The gentleman ordered high boots, but what have you gone and made instead?

(*Before MICHAEL has a chance to respond, there is a loud knock at the door.*)

SIMON. Come in!

(*The door is opened and THEDKA, the footman of the Baron, enters. SIMON pushes the slipper behind him.*)

THEDKA. Good day to you!

SIMON (*uneasily*). Good day! What can we do for you?

THEDKA. My mistress sent me about the boots.

SIMON. Yes? What about them?

(*MICHAEL, unseen by the others, goes into the other room.*)

THEDKA. My master will not want them now. He is dead.

MATRENA. What are you saying?

THEDKA. He died on the way home. When we went to help him alight, he lay limp as a meal-sack on the floor of the carriage.

MATRENA. God help us!

THEDKA. My mistress sent me to tell the bootmaker to use the leather for a pair of slippers for the corpse and to make them as quickly as he can.

(*MATRENA and SIMON look at each other with wonder-*

ment in their eyes. They turn to where Michael stood by the inner door, but he has disappeared.)

SIMON. You shall have them in an hour.

THEDKA. I shall return. Good day, my master, and good luck to you!

SIMON. And to you!

(THEDKA goes out, leaving SIMON and MATRENA gazing at each other in awe.)

MATRENA. Michael is no ordinary being. We might have guessed before this.

SIMON. You remember how he smiled?

MATRENA. He has smiled three times.

SIMON. Let us see what he is doing.

MATRENA. You do not suppose he would go from us without a word, do you?

(They go into the other room. Immediately the LITTLE DEVIL appears in the doorway at the back and The GUARDIAN ANGEL is seen in the shadow of the curtains at the left.)

ANGEL. You have lost!

DEVIL *(with a stamp of his foot)*. I have lost Simon's soul, but I have the Baron. He shall be my torch this night in hell.

ANGEL. The faith of Simon was great.

DEVIL. *Thou* didst not save him!

ANGEL. One greater than I saved Simon. It was God!

(At the word, the DEVIL stamps his foot again, slams the door, and goes. The ANGEL disappears. From the other room come MATRENA and SIMON, crossing to the hearth.)

SIMON. He was in prayer.

MATRENA. His face was illumined, and such a light shone from him that at first I thought it was a fire. Oh, Simon, who is this that has dwelt with us?

(MICHAEL comes in from the other room; goes to the steps, where he turns and faces them.)

MICHAEL. God has pardoned me, good master and mistress. Do you also pardon me?

SIMON. Tell us, Michael, who you are and why God punished you.

MICHAEL. I was an angel in Heaven and God punished me because I disobeyed Him. He sent me to earth to bear away a woman's soul. But the woman, who had given birth to twin babies, cried to me, "Angel of God, I cannot leave them! They will die. I have no kin to care for them. Do not take away my soul. Children cannot live without mother or father!" So I hearkened to the mother and flew back to God, saying, "Little children cannot live without mother or father, so I did not take away the mother's soul." Then God said to me, "Go thou and fetch away the soul of the childing woman, and before thou return to Heaven thou shalt learn three words. Thou shalt learn both what that is which dwelleth in men, and what that is which is not given to men to know, and what that is whereby men live. When thou hast learned these words thou mayst return to Heaven."

MATRENA. Tell us what you did, Michael.

MICHAEL. I went to earth and took the soul of the childing woman, then I rose above the village and tried to bear the soul to God, but a wind caught me, so that my wings hung down and were blown from me. The soul returned alone to God, while I fell to earth along the roadside.

(SIMON and MATRENA marvel; SIMON speaks.)

SIMON. Tell me, Michael, why you smiled three times, and what were the three words of God.

MICHAEL. When you, Simon, took me to your home

and Matrena's heart prompted her to share her last crust, I smiled because I knew the first word of God. "Thou shalt learn what that is which dwelleth in men," and I knew by your goodness that what dwelleth in men is love. I felt glad that God had seen fit to reveal this to me, and I smiled.

MATRENA. What was it you saw over the shoulder of the Baron that made you smile?

MICHAEL. I saw the Angel of Death. No one else saw him, and I thought: Here is this man planning for boots that shall last a year, when he is to die before the nightfall. Then I smiled when I remembered that God had said, "Thou shalt learn what it is not given to men to know."

SIMON. What was it made you smile at the story of the good Sonia Ivanich?

MICHAEL. I recognized in the children the twins that I had thought would die. Yet this woman had fed them and loved them. In her I beheld love and pity of the living God, and I understood what that is whereby men live. And I smiled. This much do I tell you to repay your kindness: that men only appear to live by taking thought of themselves; in reality, they live by Love alone. He that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God and God in him; for God is Love.

(The room is suddenly black with night. Then a hymn bursts forth as though from a great choir of voices, and in the doorway MICHAEL, bathed in light, stands looking upward. Before him, at the foot of the stairs, kneel the two peasants.)

[CURTAIN]

KINFOLK OF ROBIN HOOD¹

PERCY MACKAYE

THIS play, based on the old English ballad, "Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly," was written by the author for the Craigie School Comedy Club, by the members of which it was performed for the first time at the Berkeley Lyceum, New York City, May 10, 1901.

CHARACTERS

Men

ADAM BELL	} outlaws of the forest	A CONSTABLE
CLYM OF THE CLOUGH		A PORTER
WILLIAM OF CLOUDESLY		A HANGMAN
THE SHERIFF OF CARLISLE		A KNIGHT
THE REEVE		A SQUIRE
ALEC, a little swineherd		A CITIZEN
CASTOR	} train-bearers of the Sheriff	FIRST BOY
POLLUX		SECOND BOY
THE KING		A LITTLE PIG
THE JESTER		THE DOG

Women

FAIR ALICE, wife of William
THE QUEEN
JEAN, an old witch-wife
A LITTLE GIRL
A GOODY
SECOND LITTLE GIRL
THIRD LITTLE GIRL

Inhabitants of Carlisle

FIRST GENTLEMAN
SECOND GENTLEMAN
SECOND CITIZEN
THIRD CITIZEN
THIRD BOY

- ACT I. Englewood Forest in Merrie England
A morning in the Middle Ages
- ACT II. Fair Alice's kitchen
The same morning
- ACT III. Before the gate of Carlisle
The same day, about noon
- ACT IV. Englewood forest again
The same day, toward sundown

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PROLOGUE

(Enter, through the parting of the curtain, ADAM and CLYM, with bows drawn, followed immediately by WILLIAM with bow, on which he leans.)

ADAM and CLYM *(to the audience)*.

Stand! and deliver! and surrender yourselves!

WILLIAM *(to the audience)*.

Nay, prithee keep your seats.

(To ADAM and CLYM) Brothers, you may
Alarm the gentlewomen. Let me first
Explain that we be staid and courteous outlaws
With beards just sprouting — these five hundred years.

(To audience)

Kinfolk we are of Robin Hood, whose fame
Still blooms in Sherwood Forest as ours in Englewood.
Gentles, be calm, then! We are here to rob you
Not of your purses, but your thoughts about them.
Deliver us your worries for an hour
And we will keep them in such pawn, that when
You beg them back, perchance you 'll find them lightened,
And you, departing hence your various ways,
Shall carry with you forest fragrances
And sound of brooks into the city streets,
And thoughts of young hearts, and adventures bold
Fought in the morning of a middle age.

Surrender us *yourselves*. Be outlaws with us:
Out of the law which binds the prosy world
To build its only happiness and truth
From the precarious sunlight of To-day.
Come with us, then! for Fancy is our law,

Who, like a boy, plays leapfrog with the world;
 And you who, all the year, school, love, and scold us
 As sad and wiser elders, now — through Fancy —
 Shall sit as little children here before us
 To applaud the grown-up stroking of our chins.
 If you will come, then, quick! We'll lie in ambush.

ADAM and CLYM. Hist!

(They all disappear through the curtains.)

ACT I

SCENE: — *Englewood Forest in Merrie England*

TIME: — *A morning in the Middle Ages*

(Enter CLYM OF THE CLOUGH with bow and arrow. Outside a voice is heard singing.)

ALEC *(outside, right)*.

Merry it is in the green forest
 Among the leavès green,
 When as men hunt both east and west
 With bows and arrows keen.

(Clym stops, sniffs the air, listens with both ears, and at the sound of grunting near by, strings his bow.)

CLYM. Who sings in the greenwood there? Stand out!

(Grunting heard again outside.)

Joy! 'T is the song of bacon. It's in the air! I smell the sweet approach of breakfast bacon!

(Exit, left.)

(A pause: Then enter ALEC, the little swineherd, driving his pigs, which, hidden by the trees, are heard but not seen.)

ALEC. Heigh! heigh! go 'long! *(Sitting upon a fallen tree, he whistles a bit and then sings.)*

Lady, what makes ye weep so sad,
When gladsome is the shaw?
Yeoman, I seek mine own true love
That is a bold outlâw.

How would ye ken your own true love
If that ye might him see?
I'd ken him by his arrow keen
And by his fearless ee.

(He's bent his true-bow to the break
And aimed at that ladie;)
Now yield ye, yield ye, lady dear,
And look into mine ee.

(As he pauses, a call is heard near by in the wood.)

ADAM (*outside, right*). Yo ho!

ALEC (*looks about as though frightened*). The wood is
full of robbers. I'm scared. Heigh! heigh!

(Exit with pigs.)

CLYM (*outside, middle, imitating him*). Heigh! heigh!

WILLIAM OF CLOUDESLY (*outside, left, calling*). Yo ho!

CLYM (*answering*). Yo ho!

(Enter WILLIAM and ADAM BELL.)

WILLIAM. Clym has found game. Let's after him.

ADAM (*shooting his arrow*). Yo ho!

(Exit.)

*(Reënter ALEC, running back after a little pig, which
escapes into a hollow fallen trunk of a tree.)*

ALEC. Heigh! Come back, you ninny!

(Enter CLYM OF THE CLOUGH, running.)

CLYM. Come back, you ninny, quoth he!

ALEC. You sha' n't have him.

CLYM. Sha' n't, quoth he!

ALEC. He's run into the log. Ha, ha! So now, so now!

CLYM. By'r Lady, you'll run after him, then.

ALEC. By'r Lady, you'll run after *me*, then.

CLYM (*poking in the hollow with a stick*). Out, beastie.

ALEC. You're a coward. Why don't you steal the big pigs?

CLYM.

Little boy, big pigs are tough;
 Little pigs are good enough
 To make a meal for Clym of the Clough,
 So, crawl in!

ALEC (*running away, dodging around trees and over the log, chased by CLYM*). Oh, certainly!

(*Sings tauntingly.*)

Goosey, goosey gander!

CLYM. Boy! — boy!

ALEC (*sings*).

Whither shall I wander?

CLYM. Come, you little pig-tender, fetch me yon little tender pig.

ALEC (*sings*).

Stumble up and tumble down
 And don't you think you're grand-a!

(CLYM OF THE CLOUGH *failing to catch the boy, pretends to trip up, falls, and lies perfectly still.*)

Ha! Ha! Ha! (*Dances around CLYM.*)

“There I found an old man
 Would n't say his prayers,
 Took him by the left leg —”

(*Pulls CLYM by the leg.*)

Oh!

CLYM (*springs up and seizes him*). Would n't say his prayers; eh?

ALEC. Oh, yep — I — I'll say 'em.

CLYM. Crawl in there, then, and fetch me that pig for my breakfast.

ALEC. Well, you see — 't ain't mine.

CLYM. That 's true, it 's mine. Quick! The bacon!

ALEC (*suddenly pretending to cry*). Boo-hoo!

CLYM. What! What!

ALEC. I 'm very young to die. It will be a great loss to fair Alice.

CLYM. The pig will.

ALEC. I 'm the poor little swineherd that tends fair Alice's swine.

CLYM.

Be she fair or fowl
As a dove or an owl
Her pigs are bacon!
So crawl! crawl!

ALEC. Oh, well, I thought you were joking, but of course if you mean —

(*Cheerfully approaching the log and still held by CLYM, he suddenly catches sight of ADAM BELL, who enters, and changing tragically, calls out to him in a pathetic voice.*)

Help! O sir, help!

ADAM BELL. What 's here? What dost thou, Clym?

CLYM. Marry, I pluck a young goose.

ALEC. O sir, have pity — He would rob me of fair Alice's swine.

ADAM. Fair Alice — hello! Where dost thou live, lad?

ALEC. Please, in Carlisle, sir.

ADAM. So? (*Makes a significant gesture to CLYM.*)

CLYM (*suddenly whistles*). Fair Alice of Carlisle!

(*Both whistle.*)

ALEC. Please, sir, why do you whistle?

ADAM. Is fair Alice thy mistress, boy?

ALEC. Yes, sir.

CLYM. And is she the wife of the famous outlaw, hight William of Cloudesly?

ALEC. Indeed, indeed, she is! Do you know him?

ADAM. How say 'st thou, Clym? Wilt thou still have bacon for breakfast?

CLYM.
Aye, marry, bacon
Is the stuff to partake on.

(*Pinching ALEC's ear.*) Do you hear, boy? "Pig! Pig-a-wig!"

WILLIAM (*outside*). Yo ho, Adam!

ALEC. Hurrah! (*Escaping suddenly from CLYM and making a face at him*) Ninny! Jackanapes! Scarecat! (*Then to ADAM*) You're another. (*To WILLIAM, entering, he runs and kneels.*) Master! Master!

WILLIAM. Alec! Is it thou, laddie?

ALEC. O yes! I'm so glad to see you, Master! Those robbers are eating up all your pigs.

WILLIAM. Robbers?

ALEC. Yonder! (*Tauntingly to CLYM*) Piggywig!

CLYM. Goosey — goosey!

WILLIAM. Those, boy? Why those be my greenwood brothers, Adam Bell and Clym of the Clough! Clym, Clym, hast thou been pranking again?

CLYM. Why, brother, when thy goodwife sends thee a haunch o' bacon on legs, where 's the harm in my catching it for thy breakfast?

WILLIAM (*starting*). My goodwife?

ADAM. Fair Alice!

WILLIAM. What tidings, boy? What tidings from her?

ALEC. She hath sent me to find you in the greenwood. I have been hunting for you these three days, master, but the pigs they be always running away.

WILLIAM. But my wife? Is she well?

ALEC. I cannot say. With God's will, she is; but not with the Sheriff's.

WILLIAM. The Sheriff of Carlisle? What doth he?

ALEC. He woos fair Alice, thy wife. He wants thy house and lands, Master. Wherefore he swears thou art dead in the greenwood, and he will marry thy wife.

ADAM (*to CLYM*). Gramercy!

WILLIAM. And fair Alice — what says she?

ALEC. She says she knows thou art not dead, for and if thou wert dead, says she, thy ghost would have stood beside her and told the Sheriff he lied.

CLYM. To the health of fair Alice of Carlisle!

WILLIAM. Lead away, Alec, lead away to Carlisle, and tell fair Alice, my wife, that William of Cloudesly sends these greetings to the Sheriff: To-day he who lies in his heart, to-morrow shall lie in his grave.

ALEC (*running and dancing out*). I'll tell her. Tara! to Carlisle! Tara! tarala! (*Exit.*)

ADAM (*to WILLIAM, who is following the swineherd*). What, brother! Thou wilt not go to Carlisle?

WILLIAM (*pausing*). And why not, Adam?

ADAM. Thou art an outlaw. Thou wilt hang thyself for thy pains.

CLYM. And the rest of us, all in a row!

WILLIAM. And have ye not heard what the lad says? What! By Him that died on a tree, so be it then! And if I bring not comfort to fair Alice, my wife, let us be hanged, all three. I'm off for Carlisle. (*Starts to go.*)

ADAM (*extending his hand*). Stay! We'll go with thee.

CLYM. Yes, *stay*, and I'll go too. *Stay*, and we'll have some bacon.

WILLIAM. Nay, brothers, fair Alice is mine, and the avenging shall be mine. Fare ye well.

ADAM (*taking his arm and dragging him to middle of stage*). Not by my fay! Thou shalt not hang *alone* for me.

WILLIAM. Hark, then! And if I come not here again by to-morrow dawn, follow ye after me. Perchance I may need your help.

CLYM. And if ye hear a whistle, thus — (*whistles*) look sharp and be merry.

WILLIAM. I'll do so. Fare ye well.

ADAM (*taking him by the hand*). And take a greeting to the Sheriff from Adam Bell.

CLYM (*taking WILLIAM'S other hand*). And Clym of the Clough.

WILLIAM (*shaking both of their hands as he parts*). And William of Cloudesly!

[CURTAIN]

ACT II

SCENE: *The kitchen in the house of William of Cloudesly, at Carlisle. A door, back centre; another, left front. At a table, which is set with two bowls of porridge, sits FAIR ALICE, with her brow between her hands. In the chimney (left side, near back) sits the old witch-wife, JEAN, poking the fire.*

JEAN. Aye weepin'! aye weepin'! and na' thinkin' o' poor Jean.

ALICE (*starting up*). Who said I was weeping?

JEAN. Wha said she was weepin', quo' the hussy. Gae look at hersel' in the glass, quoth I. Ah, deary! the cryin' o't!

ALICE. That's my affair, Jean; *mine*, do ye hear?

JEAN. Oo, aye! That's right. Scold an old poor body that canna stand up for hersel' — Ay, ay, ay — poor

Jean! She would na' be gabbed to like that an Maister William were at home. Aye, aye, a blessin' o' William, my ain god-bairn! He aye was good and kin' to his poor auld godmither Jean.

ALICE. There, there, what will ye, godmother? I spoke hasty. I was thinking myself on William, away in the greenwood, and wondering an he 'd ever get a pardon from the King and come home to us again.

JEAN. Oh, of course; aye carkin' and moonin' about a big bra' man, and never mindin' to give a poor old wife a bit parritch.

ALICE. Ye must just forgive me, Jean. I have a deal to worry me. (*Handing JEAN a bowl of porridge*)

JEAN (*snatching the porridge and eating with avidity*). A traitor's wife has need o' worry.

ALICE (*her eyes flashing*). Jean!

JEAN. Dinna strike me!

ALICE. If ye were not a cripple, old wife, I 'd show ye the door. If ye had not a-been the godmother o' William, my husband, who found ye a beggar-wife and has kept ye like a queen this seven year — if ye were not an old silly cripple that can't stand nor walk to help yourself — do ye hear, I 'd show ye the door — To call the Master a traitor!

JEAN (*whimpering*). Wha ca'd him a traitor? Poor old Jeannie! She dinna mean the half she says. She aye sits here an' worrits to see how ye work, Alice lass, and him Maister William gone this day year — But he maun be dead now, poor Willy, and the parritch gets aye thinner and thinner, and sae does poor Jean — but all would be weel, if ye married the Sheriff, lass.

ALICE. What!

JEAN. Nay, nay, she dinna mean the half she says, poor old Jeannie!

ALICE (*going out*). God forgive ye, mother, for such advice. (*Exit.*)

JEAN (*watches, till the door is closed, then rises and throws the empty bowl at the door*). The Devil take ye, hussy, for sic parritch! (*She takes two or three steps forward, but retreats hastily to her chimney seat, on hearing someone approaching the front door.*) Hoot! Here comes a body. I canna take a constitutional, but a body spies upon me.

(*Enter ALEC, dancing and skipping. He hops about the room tapping on the pewter plates hung on the walls, dancing with chairs and acting like mad.*)

ALEC. Tarala! Tarala! Tara! Tarala!

JEAN. Lad!

ALEC. Tarala! Tarala! Ta-ta-tarala!

JEAN. Alec, is it yersel'? Is the Deil in ye, or what?

ALEC. Tumtum, Terralum! Tirala! Tirala!

JEAN. Are ye daft, lad? Alec! What tidings? What's happed wi' ye?

ALEC. Tirala! Tirala! Ri-la! Ri-la! Tirala!

JEAN. Ye hae news, laddie, I see it in your face. What is it? Is it about the Sheriff?

ALEC (*banging on a pan and nodding*). Ho! ho! Tiralo!

JEAN. Aye, it's him! it's him! He's comin'! Here, lad, I maun dance wi' ye too.

ALEC (*catching JEAN about the waist and dancing her round and round till she drops into a chair across the room*). Hurralo! Hirralay!

JEAN. Lad, lad, stop and tell me. (*Pointing out the window*). Is that him comin' now — yonder?

ALEC (*stopping and staring*). Peter-Piper! It's the Sheriff.

JEAN. He's comin'! He's comin' to marry fair Alice, and we'll a' live on milk and honey!

ALEC. To marry yourself! What dost thou dancing anyhow, granny? — The Sheriff marry my mistress!

JEAN. Why, what then? Didna ye say —

ALEC. He's coming. So he is — Tirlalarala!

JEAN. Who, then?

ALEC. Master William, of course. He's coming home from the greenwood. He'll be here in the half hour. But thou must not tell Fair Alice. We'll surprise her.

JEAN. Ay, marry! marry! — Get along, ye dirty pig-lad. Dinna ye ken better than drag an old cripple poor body from her chimney seat? Help me back again, ye daft looney! Here comes the Sheriff! Ay poor Jean! poor Jean!

(ALEC helps JEAN to hobble back to her place, and then, as the Sheriff knocks at the door, recommences his dancing and singing more madly than ever.)

ALEC. Tirlala! Tirlala! Tira! Tirlala!

THE REEVE *(outside, knocking)*. Open! Open! to the Sheriff of Carlisle!

ALEC. Hi-diddle! Fiddle-diddle!

JEAN. Hoot! Be still, lad. *(Calling out)* Come in, your worship.

(The door opens, discovering the REEVE, the SHERIFF and his train-bearers, CASTOR and POLLUX, about to enter.)

SHERIFF *(from the sill)*. Fair Mistress Alice, I come —

ALEC. Humpty-dumpty! *(Running between the legs of the fat SHERIFF, he upsets him on to the doorsill and runs away.)* Diddle-diddle-dee!

SHERIFF. Arrest the knave! By my astute dignity, arrest the knave!

REEVE *(with the others assisting him to rise)*. A warrant, your honor.

SHERIFF. Warrant! Arrest him without warrant.

(ALEC shows his head in the window left, bows low, then making a face, darts away.)

SHERIFF. Arrest him, I say!

REEVE. Shall I make it a law?

SHERIFF. No; a statute.

REEVE (*writing in a book*). 'T is done, your honor.

SHERIFF. That 's right. — Train-bearers, attention! — Forward — March! (*He walks with oblivious pomposity down the stage, followed by CASTOR and POLLUX and the REEVE.*) Fair Mistress Alice, I am here.

JEAN. Right welcome are ye, my lord.

SHERIFF (*looking over one shoulder*). What?

JEAN. Bonny is the day.

SHERIFF (*over his other shoulder*). Who spoke? Reeve, something spoke. Train-bearers, attention! Forward — March! (*He walks about surveying the room and stops in front of the fireplace and JEAN.*) Did the fire crackle, or did you speak?

JEAN. God gi' ye good morrow. — I hae mickle tidings for your worship. There 's lately come to the town o' Carlisle — Hist!

(*She stops, seeing ALICE, who enters door right.*)

SHERIFF. Hist!

JEAN. Hist! Come nearer, your worship. (*Takes hold of the SHERIFF's robe.*)

SHERIFF. Hands off! Avaunt, witch! Reeve, arrest her. She has a cold in her head.

REEVE (*taking out notebook*). Does your honor prescribe ducking or toasting?

SHERIFF. 'Hm — Toasting.

REEVE. 'T is done.

SHERIFF (*to ALICE*). Good — About face — Lady, a thousand pardons! A thousand pardons!

ALICE (*who has taken down a pan and begun to prepare some dough for bread*). What for, sir?

SHERIFF. For keeping you waiting so long. I had meant to come to breakfast, but was delayed. There is yet time, however, before dinner. Reeve, you may begin!

(*The REEVE takes out an immense parchment.*)

ALICE. Sir, an these be more verses, I tell you, plat and plain, I want none of 'em read to me.

SHERIFF. Reeve, you hear the lady's wishes. Read them to me.

(*The REEVE steps out, facing the SHERIFF, whom he addresses. As he does so, the faces of WILLIAM and ALEC appear an instant at the window, right, but are seen only by old JEAN, who gives an exclamation and points at the window.*)

JEAN (*to the SHERIFF*). Hist! Hist! Your honor, look!

(*The faces dodge down and disappear.*)

SHERIFF. Be still and toast; you are arrested. Proceed, sir, with the Epithalamium.

REEVE (*addressing the SHERIFF*).

Madam! I am bound in duty
To declare it, with a smile:
I am smitten of thy beauty,
I, the Sheriff of Carlisle.

SHERIFF. *I*, the Sheriff.

REEVE. *He*, the Sheriff.

BOTH (*bowing to each other*). We, the Sheriff of Carlisle.

REEVE.

Lady, though thou love an outlaw,
He is dead (excuse the smile);
For all those are dead who flout law
And the Sheriff of Carlisle.

SHERIFF. Me, the Sheriff.

REEVE. He, the Sheriff.

BOTH. We, the Sheriff of Carlisle.

REEVE.

Therefore, Alice fair, fair Alice,
Come and wed me with a smile,
Dwelling henceforth in a palace
With the Sheriff of Carlisle.

SHERIFF (*to ALICE*). With *me*, the Sheriff.

REEVE. With *he*, the Sheriff.

BOTH (*bowing to ALICE*). With *we*, the Sheriff of Carlisle.

SHERIFF. Very well read. Now the marriage papers — quickly.

REEVE. Your honor — I clean forgot them.

SHERIFF. Then run home quickly and fetch them.

REEVE. Your honor, I dare not go alone. The boys of Carlisle love me not. I dread they would pelt me with eggs.

SHERIFF. Well, well, that were no great matter to me.

REEVE. Pardon, your honor. The eggs are old and might, on my return, offend your honor's sensibilities.

SHERIFF. True, true. Take this mask, then. They will not recognize you so. Be gone and be quick.

REEVE (*taking out his notebook and putting on the mask*).
'T is done, your honor. (*Exit.*)

JEAN (*looking to see if any watch her*). I'll hie after him, and tell him all. (*Exit stealthily.*)

SHERIFF. And now, madam, nothing remains, you see, but the wedding.

ALICE. And my consent.

SHERIFF. Trust me for that. A being as eloquent as I, when he addresses a creature, madam, as amiable as

you — (*To his train-bearer*) Pollux, attention! — as rational, lady, as yourself — Castor and Pollux, cease this unseemly strife.

CASTOR and POLLUX (*who have been playing marbles in the hollow of the SHERIFF's train*). Yes, your honor.

SHERIFF. Would, as I was saying —

ALICE. Master Sheriff, if you 're a man, you 'll walk out of yon door. The house is mine, and wants no more of ye.

SHERIFF. O Heaven! dost thou hear these words? Pollux, didst hear, didst hear? This lady does not appreciate me. Her husband dead, I come unto her lowly dwelling — I, the Sheriff — and I say, "Woman, be comforted!" I, the Sheriff! "Your husband was a dog of an outlaw," I say —

ALICE. Ha!

SHERIFF. "Yet will I — I, the Sheriff — take you to wife as though you were my equal." Dost thou hear, Pollux?

POLLUX. Yes, your honor.

SHERIFF. Ah, lady! lady! Could you read my heart —

ALICE. Enough, Master Sheriff, I 'll have ye —

SHERIFF. Fair Alice!

ALICE. On one condition.

SHERIFF. Only name it!

ALICE. But if ye don't keep it, ye 'll agree to give me up, mind. (*SHERIFF looks suspiciously at the outside door.*) Nay, it 's not to walk out of the door.

SHERIFF. Then I agree.

ALICE (*taking her hands from the pan*). Make me a loaf of bread. I call that the test of a man — to make his wife's bread.

SHERIFF. Lady, consider what you ask! I am the

Sheriff — But no! All England shall behold my chivalry.
Give me the pan!

(Seizes the pan and carries it toward the fire.)

ALICE. Gramercy! Where are you taking it?

SHERIFF *(loftily)*. To the fire, madam. With fire we cook.

ALICE. But you knead the dough, first.

SHERIFF. Of course I need the dough first, and I have it. This, madam, is dough.

ALICE *(curtsying)*. Excuse me! *(Laughs aloud.)*

SHERIFF *(stops confused before the fire, not knowing what to do)*. Ah, you mean — it should be rubbed first. I remember. Castor, my gloves!

CASTOR *(giving him his great gauntlets)*. Here, your honor.

SHERIFF. These twin gauntlets, lady, shall win thy hand. *(He plunges into the dough-pan; the gloves become great balls of dough, with stuck fingers.)* Ha! Is it thus? Let Heaven be witness, then — I fight with bare hands.

(Hurls the gloves into the fire. CASTOR and POLLUX, standing on chairs, hold his train high behind him, as for a second time, he attacks the pan. Reënter the REEVE, masked as he went out.)

REEVE. I am returned, your honor.

SHERIFF. Ah, Reeve, in good time. You shall write this in the Chronicle of Love.

ALICE. Your master, sir, is in sore *need*. I fear he is not *bred* for it.

REEVE *(to the SHERIFF)*. What does your honor?

SHERIFF. Marry, I make wedding cake. She has consented, man —

REEVE. Consented!

SHERIFF. Aye; Fair Alice, the Lady of Outlaws, has consented to become mistress of the Sheriff's mansion.

REEVE. Consented! (*The SHERIFF's great sword keeps clanking against the pan as he kneads.*) Permit me, your honor; your sword is in your way. (*He removes the SHERIFF's sword, and, as he lays it down near ALICE, addresses her.*) Fair Alice!

ALICE (*slipping back*). What want you, sir?

REEVE. Will you wed this Sheriff?

ALICE. If he earns his bread.

REEVE. Not else?

ALICE. Not else.

REEVE. Fair Alice —

ALICE. Come no nearer, sir.

SHERIFF (*who has looked up*). Reeve! What insolence is this? Odd's bread-pans, sir, do you address this lady?

REEVE. Odd's vengeance, sir, do *you* address this lady?

SHERIFF. Are you aware — aware — I? I! I am a sheriff —

REEVE. No, your honor; I think you are a doughman.

SHERIFF. I! — This to me! (*Shouting.*) Here, Castor and Pollux, arrest this man.

ALICE. Masters —

REEVE (*with the point of the SHERIFF's sword, striking the pan*). I say, your honor, your cake is dough, and this lady (*flinging off his mask*) is my wife.

CASTOR and POLLUX (*running out breathlessly*). Run it!

ALICE. William — is it you?

SHERIFF. Cloudesly — the outlaw!

WILLIAM OF CLOUDESLEY. God bless thee, Alice, good wife!

ALICE. Oh William!

SHERIFF. My Reeve, then? Where's my Reeve?

WILLIAM. Tending my swine, your honor. He rides pig-back to Englewood Forest, tied backwards on the

fattest sow in the herd! I borrowed this cloak and mask, and so I waved good-bye to him.

SHERIFF. Foul treachery!

ALICE. But William, art thou safe? Hast thou been seen?

WILLIAM. Not a soul has seen me, wife. Alec brought me thy message in the greenwood, and brought me here.

SHERIFF (*making for the door*). But you shall hang now, fellow.

WILLIAM (*stopping him with his sword-point*). Presently, your honor, presently. In the meantime, what says the old proverb? You cannot have your cake and eat it, too. Now, sir, will you have this lady?

SHERIFF. Aye.

WILLIAM. Then, your honor, as I swear you shall *not* have this lady, so I swear you *shall* eat this cake. (*Pointing to the dough-pan*) Eat, your honor, eat. 'T is sweet cake.

SHERIFF (*forced to take some*). Vile.

WILLIAM. Nay, sweet to the laborer are the earnings of his sweat. (*Poking him with the sword*) Not so?

SHERIFF. Sweet, marvelous sweet.

(ALEC bursts in, out of breath.)

ALEC. Master!

WILLIAM. What, boy?

ALEC. The town is upon you. Lock the doors!

ALICE. God-a-mercy! What is it?

ALEC. Jean, is it! Jean, the old witch! I told her and she tattled. She tattled and the Constable's raised the town. (*A noise and murmur outside.*)

ALICE (*leaping to the door and barring it*). They're coming.

WILLIAM. My bow! Quick, the catch-lock at the other door! (*A knocking at the back.*)

SHERIFF (*shouts*). Help ho! Constable!

WILLIAM (*with his sword to the SHERIFF*). Wilt thou eat this? Then open thy mouth. Guard him, boy!

(ALEC stands guard over the SHERIFF. WILLIAM goes to the window with his bow and arrows. Knocking and a noise outside.)

CONSTABLE (*outside*). Open, in the King's name!

ALICE. Stand back, in Heaven's name!

WILLIAM (*shouts out*). Keep the door, wife. Cowards, let see if this find a heart in ye! (*Shoots.*)

(*Shout outside and call of "Fall back!" At the same instant, the side-door left breaks open, and enter JEAN, followed by the CONSTABLE and armed CITIZENS.*)

JEAN. I kenned the catch-lock — That 's him — that 's the traitor!

ALICE. Jean! She has betrayed us!

CONSTABLE (*striking at ALEC, who dodges him*). Victory! Seize that man. Surrender, William of Cloudesly, in the King's name!

ALICE (*rushing to his side as though to protect him*). William, William —

WILLIAM. Stand a-back, men! Not all your arms have beat me, but the tongue of a false friend. Jean, Jean, how could ye do it?

SHERIFF. Arrest him. He shall be hanged to-morrow.

ALEC (*jumping through the window, right back*). Perhaps, your honor!

[CURTAIN]

ACT III

TIME. *The same day.*

SCENE. *By the gate of the City of Carlisle. A mediæval wall, having a small turret by the gate, divides the stage slantwise, three fourths being within, one fourth without the wall. Without, there is a distant view of woods; within, right back, stands a new gallows. The gate is shut, and just inside sits an old PORTER, sunning himself.*

PORTER (*to himself*). The First of May! Eh, when I was young!

(Enter a bevy of young people, dressed in gay spring costumes, bringing flowers and singing.)

BOYS and GIRLS.

On a May morning
Come sing! Come sing!
On a morn of May,
A sweet nosegay
I'll lay before
A dear friend's door
Then run away,
Sing heigh! Sing heigh!
Ding-a-ding! ding!
On a May morning!

(A little GIRL runs out from the others, throws a nosegay at the PORTER'S feet, then runs away laughing.)

FIRST BOY. That 's he — Oh! Oh!

SECOND BOY. Who?

FIRST BOY. Her sweetheart.

BOYS and GIRLS. Oho!

PORTER (*picks up the nosegay, smells of it, then smiling, jumps up stiffly and runs after the little GIRL*). A posy! I must e'en gie a kiss to the giver. (*He chases her, limping,*

to the shouts of the others.) Hold! my bonny! Here's thy bachelor!

GIRL (*escaping him*). I'm not thy old maid.

PORTER (*panting and sitting down*). Nay, the breath, the breath!

BOYS. A forfeit!

PORTER. Eh, when I was young!

ALL. A forfeit! Open the gate.

PORTER (*putting his hand to his ear*). What?

FIRST BOY. Open the gate for us.

PORTER. Nay, here goes none out this May morning.

GIRL. Please, Master Porter!

PORTER. What? Speak harder; my ears be rusty

GIRL. We want to pick flowers in the woods. Please open.

PORTER. Aye, the greenwood tree is merry, but ye must e'en dance under the gallows-tree this morn.

(Points to the gallows.)

SECOND BOY. Who shall be hanged?

PORTER. Marry, a silly gentleman that killed the King's deer.

CONSTABLE (*outside*). Room! (*Entering*) Room for the Sheriff of Carlisle!

ALL (*to one another*). The Sheriff!

PORTER. Aye, then; be about your business.

(He and all become rather fidgety. Enter the CONSTABLE, who stands and poses.)

REEVE (*outside*). Room for the Sheriff! (*Entering*) The Sheriff of Carlisle!

PORTER (*practising to himself, bowing and scraping*). Your worship — God gie ye good morning! — Worship!

REEVE (*addressing the others*). Insignificant revelers, render laudation to your superiors!

(Enter, right, the SHERIFF.)

ALL. Hail! Hail!

SHERIFF. Pollux, lift my robe higher. (*He scowls at the people, then passes directly across to the PORTER, while all bow down.*) Porter!

PORTER (*bowing and doffing*). Your worship — God gie ye — Your worship.

SHERIFF. Porter! What does this flowery rabble at the execution? Look there — flowers!

PORTER. Aye, 't is a sweet sight o' May-day, as your worship says.

SHERIFF. A sweet sight! Villany!

POLLUX (*shouting in PORTER's ear*). He don't like 'em.

PORTER. Eh? Thank 'ee. (*To the boys and girls*) Out o' this!

SHERIFF. Reeve, I dare say they be bringing these flowers to that false traitor, Cloudesly.

REEVE. I dare say, your honor.

SHERIFF. But he shall hang!

REEVE. He shall, your honor.

SHERIFF. I go to fetch the hangman and the traitor. Porter, as thou lovest thine own neck, keep fast this gate till the hanging be over. Have a chief care thou lettest not in those two outlaws named Adam Bell and Clym of the Clough.

PORTER. Yes, your worship.

SHERIFF. Reeve, tell this rabble to go before.

REEVE. Persons, go before, and strew these unlawful flowers in the path of your lawful Sheriff.

FIRST BOY (*stepping forth with a large rose, and dropping it before the SHERIFF with mock devotion*). To the Queen o' the May.

SHERIFF. Very proper.

REEVE. Very.

ALL (*as they go out, bowing before the SHERIFF*).

On a May morning
Come sing! Come sing! . . .

(*Exeunt all but PORTER.*)

(*Enter left, without the wall, ADAM BELL, CLYM OF THE CLOUGH and ALEC.*)

PORTER (*sitting again by the gate*). Eh, when I was young!

ALEC. *Please* hurry, sirs, and save my master!

CLYM (*mocking him*). *Please* talk less, Goosey-goosey, and save thy breath. Now then, Adam, a curse on this Sheriff! Shall we in?

ADAM. Aye; look to thy bow, Clym, and God speed us. (*Strides ahead to the gate, which he cannot open.*) Out on them! They've locked the gate.

CLYM (*tries the gate*). Pooh-pooh! Master Sheriff! A will finds a way.

ADAM. 'T is a good proverb, but how get in?

CLYM. Let us say we be messengers straight come now from the King?

ADAM. Well thought on — I have a letter here in my pocket. 'T will serve. We will say 't is the King's seal. Methinks the Porter cannot read. What say you?

CLYM (*giving a skip*). I say we'll be sung in a ballad yet. (ADAM *beats loud and long on the gate.*)

PORTER (*who has dozed off, awakening with a start*). Aye, your worship, God gie ye — Eh? (*Louder knocking*) What maketh all this knocking?

ADAM. Open.

PORTER. Who is there now?

CLYM. We be messengers from the King.

PORTER. Bide ye without. Here cometh none in, till a false thief be hanged, called William of Cloudesly.

ADAM. By Mary, and if we stand long without, like a false thief shalt *thou* be hanged.

CLYM. Hello, fellow! art thou mad? Here is the King's seal.

PORTER (*who has mounted the turret and is peering over*). What say ye, my masters?

CLYM. The King's seal, thou dried bean-pod! Open!

PORTER (*descending*). The King's — Ay, then; ay, then.

ADAM (*beating the gate*). Be live! Be live there!

PORTER (*unlocking the gate and doffing*). Welcome is my Lord's seal, masters. For that, ye may come in.

CLYM (*entering with a swagger*). Avaunt, thou milk-dewed ear of mankind! (*They pass in a short distance.*)

ALEC (*aside to ADAM*). Now we're in.

ADAM. Aye, now are we in — thank God! How we shall get out — God knows.

CLYM. Why, marry, had we the keys,
We might go out when we please.

ADAM. The keys!

CLYM. Let's ask the Porter's counsel.

ADAM (*catching the idea*). Saint Christopher!

CLYM. Vile bean-pod, thou hast insulted the King's messengers!

PORTER. Now God forbid, my masters.

ADAM. Tut! thou hast. Therefore we deprive thee of the prerogatives of thine office. (*ADAM snatches away the PORTER'S keys as CLYM gags and ties him.*)

CLYM. And lower thee to the rank of — (*scratching his ear*) hm! — janitor to the basement of the gallows. (*Shoving him through a hole in the framework of the gallows.*) Come, assume thy post! Assume!

ADAM (*shutting the gate and shaking the keys*). Now I am Porter, Clym. The worst Porter to Merry Carlisle they had this hundred year.

ALEC. Master Adam, what shall I do?

ADAM. Hie thee to Fair Alice, boy. Tell her we be here to save thy master. Haste with her before us to the greenwood, and if we win, we'll all seek pardon of the King. Here, this is the key of the gate. Leave it in the outside of the lock when ye've passed out.

ALEC. Farewell, sir. *(Exit, right.)*

ADAM. And now, Clym, let bend our bows to save our dear brother from yonder tree.

(Points to the gallows.)

CLYM. My string is round.

ADAM. They're coming. Quick!

(They partially conceal themselves by the gallows.

Enter a KNIGHT, a SQUIRE and some citizens.)

KNIGHT. They're bringing the prisoner now.

SQUIRE. Will they hang him here?

KNIGHT. Yes, the Sheriff has ordered it.

(Enter BOYS and GIRLS and more CITIZENS, talking among themselves.)

CONSTABLE *(entering)*. Way for the Sheriff!

REEVE *(entering)*. Way for the Sheriff!

(Enter the SHERIFF, and on his arm JEAN, dressed in a scarlet gown. POLLUX carries the SHERIFF'S train; CASTOR carries JEAN'S.)

ALL. Long live the Sheriff of Carlisle!

SHERIFF. Citizens, this is a joyful occasion. A false traitor shall here be hanged up in praise of God and the King. As you know, our thanks for all this joy are due to this fair lady *(turning to JEAN)*, whom therefore, we have presented with this scarlet gown in token of our love. Nay, more than this, — pay attention, Pollux, — whereas the lady we once wooed doth not appreciate our chivalry — to this Lady Jean, we — we, the Sheriff *(to the REEVE)* not you — even we, the Sheriff — offer our hand in matrimony.

ALL. Long live the Lady Jean !

(Followed by laughs and oh's.)

JEAN. Ah, Tommas dearie, dinna ye think my gown's unco becomin'?

SHERIFF *(gasping)*. Yes, madam — *(aside)* "Tommas!" me! *(With a fallen countenance)* Bring here the prisoner. *(Exit the CONSTABLE.)*

SQUIRE. There he comes.

FIRST BOY. Where?

KNIGHT. He bears a bold front.

A GOODY. They say 'a hath a wife, poor man.

(Enter ALEC with FAIR ALICE, veiled. The latter seems at first reluctant to go, but is urged on by ALEC. They hurry to the gate and secretly slipping out, hasten off, left.)

ALEC. Now mistress Alice, quickly. *(Exit.)*

A CITIZEN. That's the outlaw.

ALL *(as WILLIAM OF CLOUDESLEY enters)*. Shh!

(Enter CONSTABLE, HANGMAN and WILLIAM, the last with arms bound and a rope round his neck.)

SHERIFF. Now, Master Hangman, art thou sure of thy man?

HANGMAN. Aye, your honor, I ha' hefted sixteen-stone manflesh in my day. This lad will swing prettily in the wind.

SHERIFF. Reeve, take his measure. Thou shalt have a snug grave, Cloudesly.

WILLIAM *(as the REEVE measures him)*. I have seen as great marvel, your honor, as that he who maketh a grave for me, himself shall lie therein.

(The REEVE starts and drops his measure.)

SHERIFF. Thou speakest proudly — Make ready the gallows.

HANGMAN. Aye, your honor.

(Mounts the gallows and arranges rope.)

(CLYM OF THE CLOUGH *from his hiding, whistles a forest tune. WILLIAM, hearing, takes up the tune and whistles it blithely.*)

SHERIFF. Thou pipest merrily for a gallows-bird.

WILLIAM. All birds be merry in May, your honor.

REEVE *(to the SHERIFF)*. Will not your worship view the ceremony from the bench yonder?

(Points out, right.)

SHERIFF *(to JEAN)*. Come, lady, let us watch the dying in comfort.

JEAN. 'T is na ilka body has a bran new scarlet gown, Tommas. *(Exeunt SHERIFF, REEVE and JEAN right.)*

ADAM *(aside to CLYM)*. Brother, mark the Reeve. I'll shoot the Sheriff.

SHERIFF *(outside)*. Master Hangman, begin.

(ADAM and CLYM, with a shout, spring forward, bend their bows and send two arrows whizzing out to the right.)

ADAM. Cloudesly and freedom!

CLYM. Down with Carlisle!

SHERIFF *(outside)*. Help! I'm hit.

ALL. What's there?

WILLIAM. Adam! Clym!

BOYS *(running away)*. They're outlaws.

ADAM *(flinging off the hangman and cutting WILLIAM'S ropes)*. Stand a-back! To the fight, brother!

JEAN *(outside)*. He's dyin'.

CONSTABLE. Treachery! The Sheriff is shot and the Reeve. What ho, to the rescue!

WILLIAM *(wringing a sword away from the HANGMAN and striking him down)*. In good time, brothers! Have after them, while they run!

(ADAM and CLYM, *throwing their bows from them, with WILLIAM pursue the others out right. A great commotion is heard outside; horns are blown and bells rung.*)

HANGMAN (*picking himself up*). Nay then, I 'd rather hang myself. (*Runs up the gallows and tries to hide.*)

(*Reënter ADAM, CLYM and WILLIAM.*)

ADAM. Quick, Will! The key 's in the gate. Run now for the greenwood.

CONSTABLE (*outside*). Cowards! After them!

WILLIAM. Here, Clym.

(*They hurry through the gate, which ADAM locks on the outside, just as the CONSTABLE, followed by a crowd, rushes against it on the inner side.*)

CONSTABLE. They 've locked us in. (*Mounting to the turret*) A curse on their hearts! (*From the turret*) Open the gate, ye villains!

ADAM, CLYM and WILLIAM. Ha, ha, ha!

CONSTABLE. Open, in the King's name!

ADAM (*jingling his keys and bowing with mock reverence*).

Have here your keys, Sir Constable,
Mine office I now forsake,
And if you do by my counsèl
A new Porter will ye make.
Ha, ha, ha!

(*Flinging the keys at the CONSTABLE's head, he runs off laughing with CLYM and WILLIAM.*)

ALL (*within*). Treason! Treason!

[CURTAIN]

ACT IV

SCENE: *Englewood Forest again.*

TIME: *Toward evening of the same day.*

ADAM BELL, CLYM OF THE CLOUGH and WILLIAM OF CLOUDESLY *discovered seated about a fire, dining on venison. FAIR ALICE is helping with the cooking. A dead deer in the background.*

ADAM (*drinking to CLOUDESLY*). Welcome back, Will, to the greenwood!

CLYM. And welcome, Fair Alice, thy wife.

(They drink.)

ALICE. I thank ye, brethren, and the greenwood is fair. But I would liever welcome ye home to our house in Carlisle.

WILLIAM. That shalt thou, wife, when we have been to London to the King and got us pardons.

ALICE. God grant ye get them there.

WILLIAM. We must keep a brave hope. Hist!

(A light jingling noise is heard near by; they all listen. Suddenly a little JESTER in cap and bells appears, looking anxiously about, but not spying them.)

JESTER. This way, your Majesties!

(They all draw back to conceal themselves.)

KING (*entering right with QUEEN on his arm and crossing out back right*). By my crown and sceptre, rogue, thou shalt pay for this. A merry jest to drag thy King and Queen on a wild-goose chase — to catch jack rabbits forsooth! Find the path, thou knave, the path to Carlisle.

JESTER. Methinks I smell it, Sire. This way.

(Exit.)

ADAM. The King and Queen! Lost in the wood.

ALICE. William, our prayers are answered.

WILLIAM. Aye, but how to —

CLYM. How? Hearn'ee! We are free men, to wit: The King and Queen of England roam in the wood; good. Adam and I follow after, fall to and make 'em prisoners; good again. Thou fallest to and makest *us* prisoners; better. The King knights thee out of gratitude; better again. Thou askest grace for us all, and the King grants it. Thou kissest thy wife and we all go to supper in Carlisle. (*Bowing with a flourish*) Bestissimus busted!

WILLIAM. Clym, thou art ripe with the juice of genius. We 'll do it. Up, Adam, and follow after.

ADAM (*to WILLIAM*). Follow us close.

(*Exeunt CLYM and ADAM.*)

WILLIAM. Wife, keep thee hid in the thicket yonder, and a brave heart, dear; thy husband shall be a free man.

ALICE. An outlaw no more! O Will, God speed thee! (*Enter ALEC, out of breath.*)

ALEC. Master!

WILLIAM. What now?

ALEC. The Constable is on thy track with armed citizens.

WILLIAM. We must make more haste then. (*To ALICE*) Come, thou 'rt safe yonder, wife. (*Exeunt WILLIAM, ALEC, and ALICE at back, the two former turning to left back.*)

(*Enter left front the JESTER. He examines the wood for a path and discovers the fire with meat and drink.*)

Jester. Follow your nose, saith the proverb. Methinks mine is out of joint, for I walk in a circle. What 's here! Venison! O nose, I thank thee; thou seest in the gloaming. Sack? (*Drinking*) Old sack! (*Calling*) Cheerly, your Majesties! the thorny path leadeth to Paradise. (*Enter the KING and QUEEN.*)

KING. Thou shalt find this no jest, when we get to court.

QUEEN. My lord, I am tired.

JESTER. Would her Majesty prefer sack or venison?

KING. Have done with thy jokes, fool. The Queen is weary.

JESTER (*presenting a beaker of sack to the QUEEN*). Prithee, my lady, 't is a most palatable jest.

QUEEN (*taking it*). A cup of sack!

KING. What 's this, fool?

ADAM (*springing in left with drawn sword*). Stand and deliver yourselves!

QUEEN (*dropping the cup*). Gramercy!

JESTER (*taking out a crucifix and crossing himself*). Sancta Maria!

KING. In whose name?

(CLYM and ALEC leap out.)

CLYM. Saint Hubert, and death to wayfarers!

CLYM and ALEC. Stand!

JESTER. Outlaws! Help ho!

KING. Stand by the Queen, fool! What will ye, foresters?

ADAM. Stand and surrender.

KING. We have no choice. Nevertheless, ye shall put up your weapons when ye learn that we are —

CLYM. Stand, and be silent, and deliver your gold.

KING. Know, ye rascals, that we be no common folk? We are your —

ADAM. Silence — silence is golden. Give us your gilders.

JESTER. Help ho! Help ho!

ALEC (*to the JESTER*). Wilt thou die?

WILLIAM (*outside*). Who calls, help ho?

JESTER. Help ho! (He is silenced by ALEC.)

WILLIAM (*entering and attacking ADAM and CLYM furiously*). Off, knaves! Who attacks a lady in Englewood? Yield your lives. (ALEC *runs away*.)

ADAM and CLYM (*dropping their swords*). We yield ye!

WILLIAM (*starting back, as he looks at the KING*). Know ye what greatness ye have dared to affront?

ADAM. Good captain, they told us not their names.

WILLIAM (*kneeling*). And know ye not their royal faces? God save your Majesties!

ADAM and CLYM. Grace! Grace! (*They kneel*.)

KING (*to WILLIAM*). Thou comest in good time, yeoman. What art thou?

WILLIAM. An outlaw of the forest. Pardon, Sire!

(*Enter ALICE, unobserved*.)

KING. And who are these?

WILLIAM. They be outlaws, too, and brethren, my liege. Oft have we shot thy fallow deer, and for that we beseech thee pardon.

ADAM and CLYM. Pardon, King!

KING. What be your names?

ADAM, CLYM and WILLIAM (*in turn*). Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, William of Cloudesly.

KING. Your offenses be heavy, yeomen. But William, because that thou wert so bold to stop this attack on our lives, I forgive ye all.

QUEEN. And I.

KING. Rise, freemen.

THE THREE (*rising*). Save your Majesties!

ADAM (*nudging CLYM*). Neat work, Clym.

JESTER. Perchance, your Majesty, the gentlemen will invite your Majesties to taste some of your Majesty's deer.

CLYM. Fool, thou shouldst not wish his Majesty an unlawful appetite.

WILLIAM. Be seated, Sire.

(The KING and QUEEN sit to eat.)

WILLIAM *(presents ALICE to the QUEEN)*. Lady, this is Fair Alice, my wife.

QUEEN. And well named, yeoman.

ALICE. I'm afraid your food is cold.

THE CONSTABLE *(outside)*. This way.

ADAM *(signalling to CLYM and WILLIAM to draw back)*. Hist! the Constable.

(Enter the CONSTABLE followed by CITIZENS, armed.)

KING. What men be these?

CONSTABLE *(stopping, surprised)*. Your Majesty! Is 't possible? Kneel to the King!

(CITIZENS and CONSTABLE kneel.)

KING. Whence come you?

CONSTABLE. From Carlisle, my liege; bad tidings we bear.

KING. What! How fares my Sheriff?

CONSTABLE. He is slain, my liege.

KING. How fares my Reeve?

CONSTABLE. He is slain too, my liege, and many a wounded man cries, Woe!

KING. By Heaven, who hath them slain?

CONSTABLE. Outlaws, my liege.

KING. What be their names? Quick, tell to me.

CONSTABLE. Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly.

KING *(to the JESTER)*. Fool, take away my meat; lend me thy cap and bells!

CLYM *(slyly to the PORTER and CONSTABLE)*. Give you greeting, pretty masters.

KING. To be so fooled! No, by my crown and sceptre!

Hark'ee! Scoundrels! I gave ye your freedom as killers of deer, but not as killers of men. Arrest them, Constable; they shall be hanged all three.

QUEEN (*motioning back the CONSTABLE*). That were a great pity, Sire, if any grace might be.

KING. What! Lady —

QUEEN.

My Lord —

When first I came unto this land
Your wedded wife to be,
The first boon I would ask, ye said,
It should be granted me.

KING. Well —

QUEEN.

None have I askèd till now,
Therefore, good lord, grant it me.

KING.

Now ask it, madam; for thy sake
It shall be granted thee.

QUEEN.

Good my lord, I beseech you then,
These yeomen grant ye me.

KING.

Madam, ye might have asked a boon,
That should have been worth all three,
Ye might have asked for towers and towns,
Parks, and forests, and fee!

QUEEN.

Yet none so pleasant to ask as this.

KING.

Then, lady, I grant it thee.

QUEEN.

Gramercy, Sire! I undertake
That true men they shall be.

(Extends her hands to the three yeomen, who approach with bowed heads, WILLIAM giving ALICE into the QUEEN'S hand.)

But, good my lord, speak some merry word
That comfort they may see.

KING *(to the three)*.

I grant you grace, in your Queen's name.
Kneel down to her on your knee.

QUEEN.

Now, yeomen, say "God save the King!"

ADAM BELL, CLYM OF THE CLOUGH, and WILLIAM OF
CLOUDESLEY *(kneeling and raising their right hands)*.

God save the King, Ladie!

*(The KING kisses the QUEEN'S hand and the QUEEN
kisses ALICE.)*

[CURTAIN]

NERVES¹

JOHN FARRAR

CHARACTERS

TED HILL, Captain, U. S. Air Service

BOB THATCH }
JACK COATES } First-Lieutenants

BOB LANGSTON }
ARTHUR GREEN } Second-Lieutenants
PAUL OVERMAN }
FRANK SMITH }

ROOK, a mess attendant

AN ORDERLY

SCENE: *The mess hall of Tiger Squadron, September, 1918. There is a fireplace at one side with a box for wood near it. The room opens to a kitchen on one side by a sort of counter where dishes are handed across. There are benches and one long oblong table. A small round table with rustic chairs grouped about, in one corner. There are green branches on the walls; the squadron insignia — a crouching tiger; a propeller; a black Maltese cross; insignia cut from a German machine. Flying-coats, helmets, sweaters, mufflers, and gloves are piled in confusion on a bench near one of the doors. There are two doors, one leading to the airdrome, one to the barracks. Dirty dishes from*

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lunch still clutter the table, and there are a few places set for late comers. At the curtain JACK COATES is standing in front of the fire, walking up and down in front of it. His hands with their nervous quickness show his agitation. ROOK is clearing away dishes. There is the muffled sound of guns in the distance.

JACK. Good lunch to-day, Rook.

ROOK. We've found a new place to buy fresh vegetables, sir.

JACK. How many ships are still out on patrol?

ROOK (*crawling over the counter into the kitchen*). Five, sir.

(JACK goes to the door and looks out, slams it and stands in front of the fire, his back to it, moodily.)

OVERMAN (*sticking his head through the door from barracks*). Has the patrol come in yet, Jack?

JACK (*a little morosely*). Not yet.

(OVERMAN starts to close the door, then opens it, and comes forward, a little embarrassed.)

OVERMAN. Say — Jack — you did n't go out on patrol again to-day.

JACK (*turning away from him toward the fire*). No! Doctor said I'd better stay on the ground a couple of days more — something gone wrong — with my heart, I guess.

OVERMAN (*coming closer*). Heart?

JACK (*turning, with a tight sound in his voice*). Darn it all, Paul — you know as well as I do what it is. It's nerves!

OVERMAN (*affectionately*). See here, Jack, you know I don't think you're funking it, don't you?

JACK. Maybe you don't.

OVERMAN. I don't know about the others; but what's

the use of pretending it's your heart? You don't fool anyone and it makes you worse, yourself. There are only two ways to get rid of a case of nerves, Jack, and you know what they are — a vacation, or taking the bull by the horns, and going out in spite of it.

JACK (*kicking the fire viciously*). I can't ask for leave now! We're too darn short of men!

OVERMAN (*looking at him a little steadily*). No — I don't think you can. (*Goes into barracks.*)

(JACK *throws himself full length on a chair in front of the fire*. ROOK *comes in again with a rag and wipes off table*. *Goes to door and looks out on air-drome.*)

ROOK (*going to door*). Nothing in sight, yet. Good flying weather, sir.

JACK. Yes.

ROOK (*a little searchingly for a mess attendant*). You did n't go out on patrol this morning, Lieutenant Coates?

JACK (*after pause, a little weakly*). Doctor's orders. (*Pause.*) Did you happen to hear who went in my place?

ROOK. Lieutenant Thatch, sir.

JACK (*up again from chair, and toward door, but does not open it*). Lieutenant Thatch, eh? So Bob went. What time is it, Rook? They ought to have been back long ago, ought n't they?

ROOK (*looking at his wrist watch*). Yes, sir, it's very nearly three.

JACK (*going to the table and nervously buttering a piece of bread*). They must be having a hot time!

ROOK. Very likely, sir; the guns have been going all morning. Maybe there's an attack on.

JACK. Perhaps.

(*He eats the bread in nervous little gulps.*)

(BOB LANGSTON comes in from airdrome. He has a musette bag and a suitcase. He is embarrassed and evidently a stranger. He puts down suitcase. ROOK salutes. He returns it. JACK turns and stares at him a moment a little awkwardly.)

LANGSTON (*saluting*). Is this the mess-hall of Tiger Squadron, sir?

JACK (*dropping his languor, comes forward with gay, forced politeness*). Yes; is there anything we can do for you, Lieutenant? My name 's Coates. (*Offers hand.*)

LANGSTON (*shakes hands*). Mine 's Langston. I came down this morning from the depot at Colombey to be attached to the squadron.

JACK. Fine stuff! Sorry there are n't more people here to welcome you. There 's a bunch playing cards and some more on patrol. Have you reported to the C. O.?

LANGSTON. Yes. He sent me down here to get something to eat. Is it too late?

JACK (*setting plates before him*). Not by a darn sight! (*Yells into kitchen.*) Cook, one dinner for a hungry man, done to a turn, coming. Here, sit down. Bread, butter, milk — do you want coffee or tea?

LANGSTON. Tea, thanks.

JACK. Rook, the lieutenant wants tea.

ROOK. Right. (*Crawls over counter into kitchen.*)

LANGSTON (*buttering his bread*). Gad, it 's good to get here.

JACK (*laughing*). Been a long time training, have you?

LANGSTON (*chuckling*). That 's a joke, is n't it? Kelly Field, Princeton; Mt. Clemens; Instructor at Mineola; two weeks at St. Maixent, Tours, Issoudun, Colombey — Lord! But that 's over. Now I 'll get a chance to do something.

JACK. You're right you will! Are they sending down many more pilots from Colombey?

LANGSTON. Don't think so; why?

JACK. We need 'em. Thought some of us might get a leave some time.

LANGSTON (*surprised*). Bad time for a leave, isn't it? With this all-American drive in the air?

JACK (*shamefaced*). Guess it is! We always get to thinking of leaves, though, you know. I've been in the squadron two months now. (*Rook has been serving LANGSTON for some time.*) Here, have some more jam. So you're anxious to get to work, are you? Well, you'll get a chance here. This is *some* squadron, boy. We've brought down more Huns than any other squadron in the group — and some day, maybe we'll head the army list.

LANGSTON. Gad, doesn't that seem like an awful reputation to live up to?

JACK (*softly, and inwardly squirming*). Yes, does, rather.

LANGSTON. Nice bunch of officers? I thought the C. O. was a prince.

JACK. He is, absolutely white — and we're just like a happy little family here. There's Ted Hill — he's from Harvard — Oh, you'll remember, he played quarter on the 1916 team.

LANGSTON. Sure thing! He had more drive than all the rest of the team put together.

JACK. More drive and — more everything. (*Proudly and a little wistfully*) I roomed with him at college, and I knew him well at prep school. He was always just the same — clear headed, a wonderful leader, as — as cool and brave as a lion — it's just the same here. He's got five Huns to his credit. I've always wished I were —

more like him. (*Laughing but serious*) He was one of my schoolboy heroes. *You know.*

LANGSTON. It's wonderful to have a man like that around, is n't it? He must be an inspiration.

JACK. Yes. (*Pause.*) Then there's Thatch — he's a corker, too — you'll like him. He's one of the most generous men in the world. He went out on patrol for me this morning. Doctor said something was wrong with me — heart, I guess — said I'd better stay on the ground.

LANGSTON (*eying him a little keenly*). Must be a nuisance when you want to be doing things. I'm sorry.

JACK. There are n't any patrols this afternoon or I suppose I'd be going out on one of those. (*Going to door nervously*) They ought to be in any minute now.

ROOK (*offering a plate of bread*). Got everything you want, sir? Sorry there is n't any pudding left.

LANGSTON. Best mess I've ever eaten at, buddy. Can I have some more water? (*Rook goes to get water.*)

JACK. Here comes Hill.

(*Returns to his old place by fire.*)

(*Enter HILL.*)

HILL (*hot, tired, peeling off his wrappings*). Got anything to eat? Lord, that was a morning! (*Sees LANGSTON.*) Oh, hello — new man? Why did n't you introduce us, Jack? (*Ironically*) Hill's my name.

LANGSTON. Langston's mine, captain. Wonderful mess you've got here.

HILL. You bet it is — eh, Rook? and I'm as hungry as a bear. Pass me the meat, will you? (*Helps himself and starts to eat hastily. There is an awkward silence till SMITH and GREEN come in. They unwrap themselves and come quickly to table.*) New pilot, boys. Langston — is

that right? Frank Smith, Arthur Green. (*They shake hands.*) We'll need some more potatoes, Rook, and plenty of hot coffee.

GREEN (*digging into the food*). Just come down from Colombey, Langston?

LANGSTON. Yes, this morning.

JACK (*trying to talk to HILL*). Where's Bob, Ted — talking to his mechanic?

SMITH. Did n't Bob come back?

(*There is a sudden pause in the eating.*)

JACK (*with sudden apprehensiveness*). No! (*Rising.*) Where is he?

HILL (*looking at LANGSTON a little uneasily*). Why, why, we thought he'd come back. (*All are more or less embarrassed.*) He's — he's probably — probably gone on a visit to some other airdrome — or — or, he'll probably be in any minute.

JACK (*violently agitated, appeals to HILL*). But, Ted — (*HILL jerks his head meaningly toward newcomer.*) oh — I see — yes — he'll probably be in any minute. (*There is quite a silence now. They are all agitated but trying not to show it.*)

SMITH (*doing his best to be nice*). Hope you're going to like it here, Langston.

LANGSTON (*rising*). Oh, I'm sure I am. Corking airdrome, is n't it?

GREEN. Certainly is, and we've only been here three weeks — we were farther down the line before.

JACK (*beside himself*). Ted, Bob went out for me this morning, you know!

HILL (*almost viciously*). Yes, Jack, we know!

(*Enter ORDERLY.*)

ORDERLY (*saluting*). Captain Hill!

HILL. Here!

ORDERLY (*handing him a paper*). List for morning patrol, sir. (*Salutes and exit.*)

HILL (*after looking it over*). Smith, Green, Overman, Coates, Langston — Langston, your baptism. Someone tell Overman. Will you, Art? (*SMITH goes to barracks.*) Jack, how about it, want to go out in the morning? (*There is silence as he waits to reply, hesitating weakly.*) Well, I'll take the morning patrol for you. (*Bitterly*) Better get a new heart, Jack.

JACK (*desperately*). Ted, Ted, *please* let me —

HILL (*with crisp finality*). That's all. Smith, Green, Overman, Langston, and I take the morning patrol! (*He takes up a book.*)

LANGSTON (*embarrassed by the whole affair*). I wonder if someone will show me where I'm going to bunk. I'd like to join that card game in the barracks, too.

GREEN (*jumping to his feet in relief*). Bet your life. Here, give me one of those bags. This way!

HILL (*looking up from his book*). So you think you're going to like the Tigers, do you, Langston? You know we have a good many traditions to live up to.

LANGSTON. Yes, I know; Lieutenant Coates has been telling me about them.

HILL (*with a touch of irony*). So Coates has been telling you, has he? Did he tell you that a pilot's supposed to get a Hun before he's been here three months, or he's a dud?

LANGSTON. No, he did n't tell me that. *That's* some rule.

HILL. That's not a rule; it's a tradition. Rules, Langston, are broken more often in this squadron than traditions. That tradition has only been broken once. Well, go to it, boy!

GREEN (*opening the door*). After you, old fellow.

(SMITH and GREEN enter again.)

JACK (*turning fiercely to HILL*). Ted, where's Bob?

HILL (*gathering up his flying-clothes to go out*). I don't know.

JACK. Well, I know you don't know where he *is*, Ted, but what happened? (HILL *shrugs his shoulders*.) Frank, what happened?

SMITH. We were protecting a photographic and reconnaissance mission, and after we got through protecting we kept on patrolling — all five of us. About two-thirty we met a red-nosed Fokker coming from the direction of the lines — over Pont-à-Mousson. Ted's motor was so bad he could n't climb, but he took position under its tail and fired a few shots.

HILL. My gun jammed then.

SMITH. So he zoomed and I attacked. My gun jammed, then Ted attacked again from a position behind the Fokker. He fired a good many shots.

HILL. About seventy, I think.

SMITH. The Fokker went down into a vrille and crashed. When we pulled out of that we saw a patrol of eight enemy machines coming down on Bob and Arthur. We attacked to defend them. Bob sent one machine down in flames — and then Ted gave the signal to pull out. I "dove," and the next thing I knew we were getting into formation, and there were only four of us. The enemy patrol had n't followed, but when we turned and went back to the lines, we could n't see anything of Bob. That's what took us so long.

JACK. And nobody saw what happened to him?

HILL. No! — I don't wonder you feel badly.

GREEN. Quit, Ted — that's not the sort of thing to rub in.

JACK (*snatches up his flying-clothes and is getting into them*). Lord, Ted, I'm ashamed of my nerves! And I know you've lost your respect for me. And I don't want that, Ted — Oh, you don't know what it is, Ted. You've all been so darned kind about it! Why did n't you *say* something — why did n't you *call* me a coward, instead of wanting to, and hinting, and distrusting, and keeping your mouths shut, and looking, looking, looking at me — And now — Bob — Why did n't you make me go up to-day, Ted? — The Doctor knew it, too, but *he* was kind. *Kind!* He was afraid to tell me what he thought of me. Heart! And then — sitting here by the fire — waiting, waiting — wondering if I'd have the nerve to go out to-morrow — wondering if I'd *ever* have the nerve to go out. I know too well that I'm the only one that's been here three months without getting a Hun, and it's broken your tradition. I'll get one now, though! I'm going out to find Bob! (*Dashes out.*)

GREEN (*going to door and yelling after him*). Jack, Jack, don't be a fool! Bob'll come back! (*Turns.*) We can't let him go. He's no good by himself, like that.

HILL. It's just a little temperament. Let him alone. I don't think he'll go. He's excited now, but when it comes to getting into the ship — that'll calm him down all right. I never saw a man change so — I thought I knew Jack pretty well — before. (*Pause*) Gad, it's a shame about Bob. I don't believe he's got a prayer.

GREEN. Have a game of rummy, Smith?

SMITH. Sure. (*Starts to get cards.*) Here, I'll get the cards.

GREEN. Thanks.

SMITH. There they are. Shuffle, will you? (*They sit at the table in the corner.*) Want to play, Ted?

HILL. No, I'm going to read. (*Picks up his book, sits by fire and turns pages absently.*)

SMITH. Oh come on, Ted, it'll do you good!

HILL. No, thanks!

(SMITH and GREEN play. ROOK comes in to clear off dishes. Makes a particularly high and clumsy stack of them.)

GREEN. Ah, you're saving hearts?

SMITH. How's cook disguising the corn willey to-night, Rook?

ROOK. Beans, tonight, sir — and spinach!

SMITH. Excellent — more especially the spinach!

GREEN. Is that a motor I hear, Frank?

SMITH. No — draw that jack, will you?

GREEN. Precisely what I won't do — there! — luck with me — (*Puts down four of a kind.*)

SMITH. Excellent game — rummy —

GREEN. Why — I seem to see a glimmer in the corner of your eye — I wonder if Jack —

(ROOK drops china with terrible clatter — there is a general manifestation of raw nerves on the part of all. GREEN drops some of his cards. HILL jumps up.)

HILL. Good Lord, Rook!

ROOK. I'm sorry, sir!

HILL (*ashamed of his nervousness*). Better luck next time — that's all right. (*Sits down.*)

SMITH. There you are, I told you rummy was a good game. I never enjoy anything better than winning.

GREEN (*as SMITH puts down his cards; they have played one game silently*). Got me that time. (*Rises.*) Excuse me just a second. (*Goes to door and looks out.*) Say, there goes Coates. I'm going after him. It's madness to let him go out alone. Come on, Art!

HILL. Close the door and sit down. When men are as scarce as they are now, one with a case of nerves has got to work out his own salvation. That boy's got to face his problem alone.

SMITH (*as he sits down, a little rebelliously*). Ted — I —

HILL (*firm*). Smith — that's all!

(*There is an awkward pause.*)

OVERMAN (*sticking his head through door from barracks*). Want to join our game?

GREEN. No, thanks, just started one of our own.

OVERMAN. Where's Bob?

GREEN. Has n't come in yet.

OVERMAN (*coming in and closing door quietly*). Oh! Did n't come back?

GREEN. No. We don't know just what happened. Got into a little circus and he was n't there when we came out of it.

OVERMAN. It's getting pretty late, too.

SMITH. Yes. (*Another pause*)

OVERMAN. Poor old Jack'll feel pretty badly about this. Bob went out for him. Anybody'd feel rotten — and in his condition — what a mess to be in. (*Comes over to HILL.*) Captain Hill?

HILL. Well, Overman?

OVERMAN. I wanted to speak to you about this — sickness — of Jack's.

HILL. Yes?

(*The others stop playing to listen.*)

OVERMAN. Of course, this business about his heart is all bunk — we all know that — he's just got to thinking about things too much, that's all — lost his confidence — and, just for a while — his nerve — he's tired out — I know how it is. I got to feeling that way once at training school — I could n't bear to *look* at a machine or — or

hear one. Don't you think, sir, if we 'd have a little more confidence in him, it might help?

HILL. Jack has gone out to find Bob — Overman — he went some time ago.

OVERMAN. Good Lord, you don't mean alone, Captain?

HILL. Alone!

OVERMAN. But — he — Let me go out, too, won't you? I spoke to him this morning about it — and told him I thought he had a case of nerves and that the only way to cure it was — gad, *why* did I speak to him about it — that's why —

HILL. That's all right, Overman. It was n't that — he felt badly about Bob, that was all.

OVERMAN. Well, when he comes back, then, you 'll speak to the others and — perhaps you could give him a vacation — at least try to help him — you know, sir, I 've got to know Jack awfully well since he came to the squadron.

HILL. He roomed with me all through college, Overman. I know you mean well, but — I 'll take care of Jack!

LANGSTON (*sticking his head through door*). Hi, Overman, what's the matter with you — we 're wasting our sweet lives away here. Get a hustle on, will you?

HILL. Better go back to your game, Overman.

OVERMAN (*a little stiffly, saluting*). Very well, sir.
(*To LANGSTON*) All right. Coming. (*Exit.*)

(*There is sound of laughter and talk in the other room.*)

A quartette sings, "There's a long, long trail." — The game goes on during the music. The song bothers

HILL. *He tosses his book away and listens moodily.*)

SMITH (*counting points*). Sixty-nine. Good Lord!

GREEN. That makes game, too. Let's start another.
(*They play.*)

ROOK (*comes in with silver for dinner-table and begins setting it quietly*). Nice afternoon, sir.

HILL (*not hearing*). What's that, Rook?

ROOK. It's a nice afternoon, sir.

HILL. Yes, it is, Rook. How are you getting along in the squadron now?

ROOK (*embarrassed*). Good enough, sir.

HILL. I'm glad.

ROOK. There was — there was something I'd — I'd like to —

HILL. Go ahead, old fellow, out with it —

ROOK. Well, I heard that there was going to be one or two men chosen from each squadron, sir, for flying training — you know, to be sent to a school, and afterward maybe commissioned — and I hope you don't think I was fresh to say anything about it, but I enlisted because I thought I might get a chance to fly.

HILL. Good, Rook, you'd make a good man! How old are you?

ROOK. Nineteen, sir.

HILL. Hm — and where'd you go to school?

ROOK. Had four years at high school, sir, and I would have gone to college this year, if it had n't been for enlisting — Brown University, sir.

HILL. Good! Ever driven an automobile?

ROOK. Yes, sir, ever since I was sixteen.

HILL (*thinks a moment. Rook goes on setting table*). You're quite sure you want to fly?

ROOK. Yes, sir, I've always wanted to.

HILL. I know; so many people do. You're pretty young, Rook.

ROOK. Not too young for flying, sir; it takes them young.

HILL. I know — that's the worst of it — and it — it

—yes, it takes them young. Well, I'm fond of you, Rook, and you're good officer-material. I—I'll think it over—but—but—flying's a queer game, Rook, and—and you're awfully young.

ROOK. You don't think I'd be *afraid*, sir?

HILL (*hastily*). Of course not, Rook! You're not that kind, but—flying's a queer game—I'll think it over—speak to me about it again. Would you like to get us some tea? It's been a bad day—and we're tired.

ROOK. Right away, sir. (*Exit.*)

GREEN. Rook would n't be bad at all, Ted—Say, I'm glad you thought of the tea. I wish it were something stronger; I feel rotten.

OVERMAN (*entering from barracks*). Well, Langston has n't got anything left but his uniform, a shirt, and enough money to pay a week's mess-bill! Says he never played poker before, and we believe him.

LANGSTON (*throwing himself on a bench*). You can kid all you like; but mark my words, I'm going to play again. Babes in the woods sometimes surprise the world as they come out of the leaves. Wait and watch, my dear fellow; maybe you'll be asking me to pay your mess-bill next time.

OVERMAN. Maybe—do your worst, old man.

SMITH. Once more, Art—Did the gods give you luck at the cradle?

GREEN. There's more than luck in rummy—it takes intelligence.

OVERMAN. Oh, oh—at him again, Frank. I would n't let a man like that trim me again.

LANGSTON. Captain Hill?

HILL. Well, Langston?

LANGSTON. If I'm going out to-morrow morning, I'd better go over a map of the sector, had n't I? I'm a

little slow on the uptake when it comes to orienting myself.

HILL (*rising*). Good, Langston, you're right. Should have thought of that myself. (*Goes to a side shelf of some sort and gets a map mounted on wood, about a foot and a half square.*)

GREEN (*putting down all his cards*). Voilà!

SMITH. You certainly are trimming me.

HILL (*sits down*. LANGSTON *comes and looks over his shoulder*). Here you are. Take this and go over it carefully for terrain. Later on, after you've got an idea of that, I'll send you down to the operations officer — he'll give you some fresh dope on trench positions and so forth. It's simple enough, though, Langston. All you have to do is to stick to formation and we'll bring you back O. K.

LANGSTON (*laughing*). It's a little safer to know which direction your own lines are in, though. In case something *does* happen — I'd so much rather have lunch to-morrow on *this* side of the lines.

HILL (*softly*). Yes! (*Louder*) All right — go to it. (*ROOK has brought in tea and is serving HILL.*) Good for you, Rook, that's the boy!

ROOK. Sugar, sir?

HILL (*helping himself*). Thanks.

ROOK. Usual number for supper, sir?

HILL (*almost fiercely*). Yes! They may be back any minute, Rook! (*ROOK serves the rest.*)

GREEN. Would you mind getting me some hot water, Rook?

(*Door from airdrome opens. BOB THATCH enters, a patch over his eye. They crowd around him with cries of "Bob," "Good old Bob," "Where you been, Bob?"*)

THATCH. One at a time, one at a time! Rook, get me a cup of hot tea, will you?

HILL. You gave us a fright, Bob; where have you been?

THATCH. I know. I tried to get you by telephone — but H. Q. had all the wires hot with some dope or other and I could n't get you.

GREEN. Where in time did you go — we saw you shoot down that Hun — fine work, Bob; and then when we pulled out — you were just *nil* — gone completely.

THATCH (*sitting down*). Well, you remember that group of eight machines that attacked us.

SMITH. Ah, oui! One does remember things like that, Bob.

THATCH. Well, when you gave the signal, Ted — I did n't pull out as quickly as I might have. That Hun had done something or other to one of the controls — luckily, however, I managed to keep going — and they decided to pull out, too — but up hops another two enemy ships and on to my tail — and little Bobby dives. I did n't dare do much fighting, though I did get in position on one of them and let go a few bursts — nothing happened to them — worse luck — but one of the sons of guns put a bullet through my tank.

OVERMAN. Good Lord!

THATCH. I said a few things more picturesque than that, believe me! *But* — and here's where the good fairy comes into the story — the tank did n't explode! I landed in a field about thirty kilometres north of here. The machine nosed over and is a mess. My eye was scratched — otherwise, behold your Bob as good as ever!

HILL. And with one more Hun to his credit.

THATCH. Oh, that 'll have to be verified.

GREEN. How 'd you get back?

THATCH (*laughing*). Thereby hangs a tale. Two American doughboys thought I was something else than what I was — maybe they took me for a Boche — it's about time our infantry learned to know an American machine when they see one. At any rate they didn't give me a very cordial reception!

OVERMAN. I can just see you, Bob, bleeding like a stuck pig, and trying to impress the rank and file that an aviator's really an officer.

THATCH. Believe me, I did. If an officer's measured by his ability to use language properly and with sufficient strength. At any rate, the colonel of their regiment sent me down in a side-car after I'd gone over the whole mess with his Intelligence Officer. By the way, one of the two machines was a new monoplane — at least I've never seen it before.

HILL. Really — has it got anything —

THATCH. Mean, I should say — speedy, and climbs like a good fellow — that's the one that got me, I think.

HILL. Watch out, boys — they spring a new one every minute!

THATCH. I told the C. O. about it. Where's Jack — is he feeling any better? (*ROOK gives tea.*) Thanks, Rook. Milk, please.

GREEN (*embarrassed*). Jack's gone out!

THATCH. What do you mean?

HILL. When he knew that you didn't come back, he felt pretty badly and went out to find you.

THATCH. Good Lord, that's foolishness — and with his heart?

HILL. Heart! It was a clear case of nerves!

THATCH. Well, we all get a case of nerves at one time or another, don't we?

HILL (*coldly*). Perhaps.

THATCH. It was absurd to let him go — I'm going.

HILL (*gripping him by shoulders and sitting him down*).
No you don't! Drink your tea!

(*The ORDERLY enters and, without speaking, hands HILL a paper. Leaves, saluting.*)

GREEN. Anything special, sir?

HILL. They're pulling off a little attack, to-morrow.
There'll be extra patrols, and some special stuff.

OVERMAN. Ground-strafig?

HILL. Yes, Overman. Have we plenty of bombs?

OVERMAN. Plenty — I'll go out and see about them
now. (*Exit.*)

HILL. Right — and it's barely possible that they may
have to use us to do some liaison — pray Heaven the
infantry have n't used all their ground signals to wipe
their shoes on!

SMITH. Can I do ground-strafig, Ted?

HILL. I'll see the C. O. Thanks, Frank. And now,
I think the four of you might see the operations officer
before supper. Show Langston the way, will you?

(*SMITH, GREEN, and LANGSTON exit. ROOK is bringing in the bread, butter, and jam for supper.*)

THATCH (*a little angry*). Ted, I don't think you've
been quite fair to Jack, lately.

HILL. Why not, Bob? I know him better than any
of you — I think I know how to manage him!

THATCH. That's where you're wrong, Ted. You
know that your attitude toward him is changed since
he's had this — this — nervousness. You treat him as
if something were wrong, *morally* — as if you thought he
was a coward, I mean. Don't you know him well enough
to know that it's not moral — that's not it at all — it's
a physical state that's got him to thinking too much
about himself and this fool war — and flying. He's

thinking all the time he'll funk if he goes up — and so he funks going up — and then *you* treat him as though *you* thought he was a coward. That's the worst thing in the world you could do. He worships you — you must know that — I did n't watch you through college for nothing. The reason he worships you is because you're *different*. It's your duty to understand him, Ted — and to help him — you can't really *believe* he's a coward — you know him too well for that.

HILL. I don't know.

THATCH (*challenging*). Why not?

HILL. I never thought about it in college, Bob! I just liked him because he was *different* — full of life and new viewpoints — he brought me things that I never thought about except when he brought them to me — he was a perfect companion. But now that I look back on it — he never took a position of leadership — he stopped playing football at school because the doctor told him he must — and darn it all, Bob, now that I look back on it — how do I know that it was n't because he did n't have the nerve to play!

THATCH. You never took the trouble to figure him out — did you? You took his real friendship and never gave him anything but affection. Think of the things he must have forgiven you — dullness, misunderstandings, selfishness — and you never took pains to find the things in him that you might have to forgive. You have n't got any imagination, Ted; that's what's the matter with you!

HILL. Perhaps not.

THATCH. No, you have n't. Jack has — a great one, a terrible one, if you wish to call it that. Where you'll die *one* death, he'll die a thousand deaths an hour. I remember once his saying to me: "Bob, I'd like a chance

to prove that I was n't a *physical* coward!" You and I, Ted, have got the confidence of physique and long training in athletics — I've got some imagination — you have n't much of any. It's darned easy for us to be heroes!

HILL. That's not fair.

THATCH. Yes it is, too — and I don't believe even *you* are free from a case of what you call nerves. If the war goes on and on and on — and you don't have a vacation — some morning you'll wake up, and you'll hate the sound of the guns, you'll hate to get up and go out in the cold and mist, you'll cringe when you see a ship, and you'll have cold feet when you put your boots on the rudder-bar to try out the controls. *You*, quarterback and leader of men — you'll get it — and maybe you'll get up, and if you do you'll probably come back — and maybe you won't.

HILL. I've never funk'd a game yet, Bob.

THATCH. No — you have n't funk'd a game — you have n't funk'd physically; but you're funk'ing a friendship now, and that's more important. The more imagination, the more fear, Ted; and the greater the man that overcomes it! If you'd been a *man*, Ted, you'd have seen what was the matter with Jack — and you'd have helped him, instead of letting your miserable stupid thoughts show all over you and torture him. That's what it was — torture. How many concessions the weak make to the strong, Ted! How little understanding the strong have of the weak! I think, Ted, that you were pretty hard on Jack.

HILL. I think perhaps I was, Bob.

(OVERMAN and LANGSTON *rush in, breathless.*)

OVERMAN (*rushing in*). Captain Hill?

HILL. Yes, Overman?

OVERMAN. Lieutenant Coates just brought down a Hun back of the airdrome — it was cracking — the Boche was shot through the heart, and there were plenty of bullets in the fuselage — magnificent shooting.

THATCH. Where is Jack now?

OVERMAN. Frank and Art are bringing him in. He 's as pale as a sheet. Seems to be in pretty bad shape.

HILL (*strained out of his calm*). What's wrong with him?

OVERMAN. I don't know, but he looks like a ghost.

ROOK. Is there anything I can do, sir?

OVERMAN. Yes, get a doctor, quick!

LANGSTON (*throwing open the door*). Here they come!

(*Enter COATES, SMITH, and GREEN. COATES is terribly pale, muddy, and disheveled.*)

THATCH. Sit down here, old boy, by the stove. Get some whiskey and hot water, will you, Paul?

JACK (*sitting down heavily, waves tea aside*). Well, I did it at last. Good fight, too — that Hun was some boy. So you came back — Bob.

THATCH. Bet your life, Jack, safe and sound.

LANGSTON (*boyishly*). Tell us all about it, Lieutenant Coates.

JACK. Oh — (*Winces as if in terrible pain and his hand drops from his chest*.) I — I 'm sorry — it 's foolish to — some other time — Langston — Ted, you don't think I 'm —

HILL (*almost broken*). Jack — I — don't know what to say — I 'm proud, so proud of you.

JACK (*wincing again and sinking lower*). Ah —! (*Laughing*) You know for a while I thought you were going to disown me, Ted!

HILL (*bending over him*). Don't — Jack — (*Looking up quickly*) Does it hurt very badly, Jack?

JACK (*grabbing his hand and in terrible pain*). Ted! — (*Laughing*) Hurt? What could hurt — Ted, I — do you think — I —

HILL (*motions the others away*). Jack, I think you're wonderful!

JACK. And you *do* understand *now*, don't you, Ted?

HILL. Yes, Jack, I understand. (*As COATES winces*) I was such a fool not to understand before.

JACK. You were always — just right — always the best — and bravest — (*He groans.*) Ted, I'm so happy —!

HILL. Is there any way I can — can tell you — Jack, how much — I want you to — to forgive me — how much — I care?

JACK. You care — that's all — that's plenty. (*Again the pain. Laughing*) Say, Jack, remember the room with the yellow curtains and the books I used to buy that you thought were silly —

HILL. Please — Jack — nothing was silly!

JACK. Oh yes it was, all silly — till now — now, Ted! (*He groans again.*) It was a darn good fight.

HILL (*taking his hand*). Yes, Jack, glorious!

JACK. And the good old scraps we had, Ted; and evenings by the fire, and house-parties at home. (*HILL turns away. JACK becomes delirious.*) There he comes! See him! See him! That Boche! He's shooting. I'll get him. Stop trembling. Stop trembling. There he comes! Steady. Steady. I'll get him! I'll get him!

HILL. Brace up, Jack. Don't look like that.

JACK. Ted — I'm — afraid — Ted — I won't — be — able — to — go — out — on — that — morning patrol.

(*He dies. TED bends over quickly, his face hidden in one arm.*)

[CURTAIN]

THE VIOLIN-MAKER OF CREMONA ¹

FRANÇOIS COPPÉE

CHARACTERS

TADDEO FERRARI, the violin-maker

FILIPPO, his pupil

SANDRO, his pupil

GIANNINA, his daughter

PAGES, CITIZENS, VIOLIN-MAKERS

SCENE: *Cremona, about the year 1750, in the violin-maker's shop and salesroom. There are high wainscoted walls, hung with musical instruments and portraits of old musicians. Doors R. and L.; glass door C.; street flat for backing; counter with musical instruments upon it, L.; chair in front; desk R.; table and armchair, R. C.; tools and uncompleted violins lying about on shelves and table. The curtain rises discovering FERRARI and GIANNINA; he is seated in an armchair.*

FERRARI. No, Giannina, I have given the word of an honest man; and as sure as my name is Taddeo Ferrari, Master of the Violin-Makers of Cremona, I am going to keep it.

GIANNINA (*pleadingly*). But, dear father —

FERRARI. It is of no use to talk; would you have me disgrace our trade by breaking my promise — I, its

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leader and manager, and bearer of the banner in our procession? No; when the contest is decided you shall be married, as I have said.

GIANNINA. Do you not consider me in the matter at all?

FERRARI. Consider you! It is a great honor for you. Our old Podesta, — peace to his soul! — wishing to make our instruments still more famous in the future, has left his gold chain to the apprentice in our city who will make the best violin; and I, a simple artisan, inspired by this fine example, have pledged my daughter and my house to the winner of the prize. Will you not consider it an honor to have for a husband the finest young violin-maker of Cremona?

GIANNINA. But, father, I have told you there is some one I care for.

FERRARI. Oh, Sandro? Well, he has the same chance as the others, and if he is not successful you must forget him.

GIANNINA. Ah! It is easy to say forget him; but suppose the winner is some scamp, unworthy of me?

FERRARI. A skillful workman is always an honest man.

GIANNINA. Some lazy fellow, with no care for the future?

FERRARI. As he can command the highest wages, he can afford to be lazy at times.

GIANNINA. A brute who would beat his wife? You know there are such.

FERRARI. If he has not peace at home, I for one would not blame him.

GIANNINA. A drunkard perhaps — one who would be drunk on Sundays?

FERRARI. Well, my daughter, even I am sometimes

cheerful on Sunday. Besides, a good musician does not need to be sober.

GIANNINA. Suppose he should refuse to take me?

FERRARI. By Saint Cecilia, the scamp would be hard to please. Such a chance as this is not to be had every day. Two thousand crowns dower with a girl like you, Giannina, besides my business — mine, the beloved pupil of Stradivarius! Nonsense! Don't worry me any more about it. I am getting old and need a successor, and whoever the winner may be, he shall have my house and my daughter.

GIANNINA. But should it chance to be —

FERRARI (*interrupting*). Enough of these objections.

GIANNINA. If the winner — it makes me laugh even to think of it — if it should be your apprentice, Filippo?

FERRARI. I should not be at all surprised to see him win; and if he brings me the golden chain you shall marry him.

GIANNINA. Marry Filippo!

FERRARI. Why not?

GIANNINA. A hunchback?

FERRARI. Do you think I cannot see that? But were he twice so, with two humps like a camel, — as I own he has appeared to me at times, — you should marry him all the same.

GIANNINA (*softly to herself*). May our good Lady protect me!

FERRARI. Is he not one of the best of boys? If he is not handsome, he is a great artist. You know I am a severe critic; but the day he took part in our little concert, while I sat listening and looking into my glass of old Asti, — you remember the gold seal, — he made the strings moan beneath his bow, and in his playing put such grief and joy that I felt two big tears

come; I tried to stop them, but down they rolled; and that was the only time I was ever foolish enough to water my wine.

GIANNINA. I respect him, as you do, father; I pity him, and have done my best to help him forget his misery ever since he came to our door that winter's day begging his bread — but how could I love him?

FERRARI. Come, come, come! If that is your only objection, let us stop talking, and I will go and get some wine worthy of this great day.

GIANNINA. Let me go for you; the stairs are steep.

FERRARI. No, no, I can manage them all right going down; they are never steep and crooked until I come up. Next to drinking, give me the pleasure of choosing the wine. *(Exit, L.)*

(GIANNINA, left alone a moment, sighs despondently, and sinks into a chair. Enter SANDRO, L., carrying violin in a black wooden case, which he places on counter.)

SANDRO. Alone, Giannina?

GIANNINA. Sandro! *(Going to him.)*

SANDRO. Have you good news for me; or does the master still keep to his resolve?

GIANNINA. More firmly than ever. He is determined that I shall marry the prize-winner, whoever he may be.

SANDRO. He is cruel! Did you tell him how much you loved me?

GIANNINA *(shyly)*. I told him that I loved you, but not how much; that I can tell only to you. *(Extends her hands to SANDRO, who embraces her; she releases herself, walks over to the counter and points to violin.)* Is it finished?

SANDRO. Can you ask? Does not my only hope depend on it? And to think that to-day in a public contest the happiness or misery of my life is to be decided!

GIANNINA. Are you satisfied with your work?

SANDRO. That depends. I have made it by every rule of our art, choosing the wood and varnish with the greatest care; it is an instrument worthy a master, and yet —

GIANNINA (*interrupting him*). And yet — why do you doubt? You will win the prize — you must win it! My father is the best artist in Cremona, and it is from him that you have learned; what other master's pupil need you fear?

SANDRO. None.

GIANNINA. Well, then?

SANDRO. I have a rival in our own workshop.

GIANNINA. Filippo? Are you sure he will try for the prize?

SANDRO. Yes; I heard him yesterday telling your father that he would — the little viper! Cursed be the day you took compassion on him! He thinks you are free, and hopes to win you.

GIANNINA. No, no, Sandro, you wrong the boy. He only wants the gold chain and the title of Master; he does not want me.

SANDRO. I am not so sure of that, but I am sure he will win. Oh my darling, I have never suffered so in my life; I am tortured with jealousy.

GIANNINA. You jealous — Sandro? — You foolish boy!

SANDRO. Yes, I am; for I know his work, and it fills me with envy; and soon they will all know it as I do. Listen: the other night I was at my window and under the quiet of the summer skies I thought of you. In the fragrant darkness of the garden a nightingale was singing, and its clear notes mounted in ecstasy to the stars. All at once I heard another song as touching, as divine as that

of the bird. Breathless I listened, and presently within the shadow I saw the figure of the hunchback, all alone. His violin, arched by the bow that trembled in his hand, poured forth its music sweet as the voice of Philomèle, expressing love and grief commingled. The plaintive instrument and the loving bird, in turn, breathed to the night their trills of crystal, till I, enthralled by this harmonious strife, no longer knew which was the violin and which the bird, so did their sweet notes blend in winging flight.

GIANNINA. Does the success of a rival make you jealous?

SANDRO. I know it is a feeling unworthy an artist, but oh — if he should be the victor!

GIANNINA. His victory will not change my love for you; whatever comes, I promise to be yours.

SANDRO (*embracing her*). You are the dearest girl in the world. (*Noise and shouts heard without.*)

GIANNINA. What is that noise?

(*FILIPPO dashes in, C., closing door violently after him; he is breathless and disordered.*)

FILIPPO. The little devils! They had almost caught me!

GIANNINA. What is it, Filippo? — who were they?

FILIPPO. Some little blackguards, armed with stones and glass.

GIANNINA. Why, you are hurt! (*To SANDRO*) Some water, quick!

FILIPPO. It is nothing.

SANDRO (*bringing water*). Tell us how it happened.

FILIPPO. It is really nothing. I met a pack of those good-for-nothing boys just now, pelting an old half-blind dog with stones. I could not bear to see them tormenting him, so I pushed my way into the crowd, telling them to

have some pity; they turned on me furiously. Ah, then they thought no more of the beast; now they were hunting the hunchback; it was much more amusing. I fled down one alley and up another. I don't doubt they would have finished me if they had caught me; but now I am here. I am glad the poor dog got the chance to escape.

GIANNINA (*bathing his forehead*). Poor boy!

FILIPPO (*looking up gratefully*). Thanks, thanks! You are very kind.

GIANNINA. Is that better?

FILIPPO. Yes, indeed; the pain is quite gone. (GIANNINA *stops bathing his forehead; he looks lovingly at her and kisses her hand.*)

SANDRO (*aside*). He loves her! I was not mistaken.

(*Enter FERRARI, L. D., a little intoxicated, carrying a basket with bottles in it.*)

FERRARI. Don't understand it at all. For twenty years they have been so — red seals at the right, green seals at the left; now why should they be changed? I don't reproach them, I don't reproach anybody, but I don't understand it at all.

GIANNINA. Father!

FERRARI. You still here, daughter? Come, help me to dress. I must look my finest, for when the last bow is scraped, we will have a dinner that the guild will be proud of. (*Exit, R. D., followed by GIANNINA.*)

SANDRO. The decisive moment will soon be here, Filippo.

FILIPPO. Yes, comrade.

SANDRO. Is your violin ready?

FILIPPO. Yes.

SANDRO. Are you satisfied with it?

FILIPPO. Yes, entirely. And you?

SANDRO. Not altogether.

FILIPPO. I am sorry; for if I fail, your success would make it easier. Give me your hand, comrade.

SANDRO. No! (*Passes brusquely by him and exits, C.*)

FILIPPO. Jealous! That is the trouble; but he suffers — I must not blame him. No, that cannot be it. What folly to think that with all his strength and beauty he should begrudge me success in this! It would be well, though, to be friends, although we are rivals. He does not know yet how lonely I am, and how I long for sympathy. But my beautiful violin, you console me for all. Poor instrument, I am like you, bent and crooked, a sensitive soul in an unshapely case. (*Goes and gets violin — which is in a red case — from behind the counter, laying it on the table.*) Come, let me see you once again, (*opens violin-case and leans over it*) dear one, for whom I, weak and tired, have had the courage to work so many days and nights. Soon from the depths of your soul you must send forth the *scherzo* that laughs, the song that weeps; the world must hear the sublime tones that sleep in your heart. I want to see you, to touch you again; I will not wake your sweet notes; I only want to see myself mirrored in your golden wood once more — for the last time. (*Takes violin out of case.*) Good-bye, my friend; we must part for your glory and mine. But comrade, whatever your life, bohemian or noble, whether you make the peasant dance or thrill to the touch of a master in the great world, do not forget me. Have I not given you your exquisite voice — I, the hunchback, who have breathed into you my soul? (*Puts violin back in case.*) I am a child; I deceive myself, poor fool. It is not the desire for glory alone that has given me strength for the task; it is Giannina, she who alone has pitied me in this hard world. When I wandered, a little vagabond, to her father's door, she only did not laugh at me. No; she cannot be offended at this

love that I have hidden from my childhood; nor at my wish to be famous that she might love me. If I win I will not insist upon the fulfillment of her father's vow; but perhaps — who knows — her heart is still free, and when I give her the golden chain, and she feels that the flame of genius has flashed from this frail body for love of her, perhaps, as she is the child of an artist, she will think of my talent and forget the rest, and there will be so many reasons that — Oh! this dream will kill me!

(*Enter GIANNINA, C.*)

GIANNINA (*aside*). He is alone; perhaps I can find out if there is any hope for Sandro. (*Aloud*) Filippo!

FILIPPO (*starting from his reverie*). Giannina!

GIANNINA. You deserve to be scolded. To think that you have not told me, and that I alone was kept in ignorance —

FILIPPO (*interrupting*). Told you what, Giannina?

GIANNINA. That you were trying for the prize.

FILIPPO. Ah! Giannina, you would have been the first to hear it from me, had it not been for your father's pledge. Forgive me, Giannina, if I have not dared.

GIANNINA. Ah, put that part of it aside; my dear old father really loves me too much to leave my happiness to chance; but every one has a right to hope for the chain, and you most of all, if what I hear is true.

FILIPPO. And what have you heard?

GIANNINA. That your violin is a masterpiece, and that you will certainly win.

FILIPPO. I have done my best; but who will care for my failure or my success?

GIANNINA. Who? Are we not all your friends?

FILIPPO. Pardon me; I am oversensitive sometimes, and it makes me suspicious. You have always been my friend,

and I am an ingrate. I know you will be glad when I tell you I am almost sure of success. Of course when I began my work I was careful in choosing the wood — old fir for the body, maple for the neck — and took the greatest pains in making it; but all that is nothing — other violins may be as good in that way; but the master stroke was when I discovered one night while I was at work the lost secret of that wonderful old varnish —

GIANNINA. What! The famous varnish of the old masters?

FILIPPO (*excitedly*). Yes, I have found it; and to-morrow I can be a generous rival, and give the secret to them all. I am sure of it: I have compared my violin with a famous old Amati, and it has the same tone, — can you believe it? — the same! Is it not wonderful that from these bits of wood I can bring out a note that will fill a cathedral?

GIANNINA (*aside*). Poor Sandro!

(*Sits in armchair, resting her head on her hand.*)

FILIPPO. Since that night I have hidden my happiness like a lover. My life has been full of joy. Every morning before it is yet day I take my violin and pass through the sleeping city into the open country. There, resting myself on the slope of a hill, I wait and dream for the sublime hour when the sun shall rise. At last, when the horizon begins to quiver with light, when the soft rustling about me speaks of the great awakening of nature, when the grass trembles, and the woods murmur, and the twittering of birds comes from the thicket, rapturously I take my violin and play. Ah! do you understand — it is the recompense for all my pain. I play madly, accompanying the glorious harmonies of the breaking day; the long sigh of the wind through the leaves; the ecstasy of the birds; and my precious violin trembles close to my heart and

mingles with this hymn of the dawn its song of youth and joy.

GIANNINA (*aside*). O Sandro, Sandro! (*Aloud*) Is it so beautiful?

FILIPPO (*taking violin from case*). Listen to one note only.

GIANNINA. I wish to hear more than that. Play for me.

FILIPPO (*aside*). Her voice is almost tender! Dear Heaven, does she wish me to succeed? (*Aloud*) Do you really wish it?

GIANNINA. Indeed I do. (*Aside*) It is the only way of learning the truth.

FILIPPO. Listen then. (*He plays; GIANNINA listens anxiously, showing at once admiration and grief; finally she rests her arms on the table and puts her head down, weeping.*) What, Giannina! You weeping? Have I made you weep — I, who have made so many laugh with scorn? Is it not like a voice that sighs? Oh how grand this art is that 'can make me, the despised hunchback, bring tears to your eyes! I am no longer the outcast of yesterday; I have won the right to lift my head with pride. You have wept, and I need no other glory. No honor will be so precious as these tears from your dear eyes!

GIANNINA. Stay! I must not deceive you. I understand your artist's pride; I share it with you, as I have your grief; but it is not that which makes me weep.

FILIPPO. What then?

GIANNINA. It will give you pain; but you will pity me, I know, when I tell you that I too have dreamed of success for one that I love, and that all my happiness is destroyed by your success.

FILIPPO. Ah!

GIANNINA. You see — I did not know of your genius; you had kept it hidden from me; I thought you still a

novice at your work. It was natural, was it not, for me to wish success for the man I loved? If I had known you had the greater talent, it would have been hard to know which to be gladdest for. I should have been prepared, and I would not have wept as I have to-day.

FILIPPO. You love him?

GIANNINA. Yes.

FILIPPO. Sandro?

GIANNINA (*bows her head affirmatively*). He also hoped to succeed, for it would have united us. But you are my friend, my brother, and there is no bitterness in my sorrow. You deserve the prize. Forgive me; but my love was stronger than I. (*Weeping.*)

FILIPPO (*laying violin on table*). Giannina, do not weep, I beg of you. Indeed I suffer as much as you do.

GIANNINA. How cruel I am! I had forgotten your trouble, and that your music is all you have to console you. It is over. I am no longer sorry; I would rather the glory should be yours. You are a great artist, and I love you. (*Taking his hand*) See, I am crying no more. I wish you to have it. Look at me, I am smiling (*sobbing*); but my love is stronger than I. (*Exit, C.*)

FILIPPO. Well, it is ended. Everything has been said; she loves another; and why not? Shall I blame her? He is the lover she would dream of. And you, hunchback, have you never looked in the glass? Blind — blind and mad! She loves Sandro! What good will it do now to win the prize? I wanted to please her — to have her admire me — and I have succeeded in making her cry. I will not enter the contest; Sandro shall have the prize, and there will be no more tears. I will destroy my violin, and he will be the victor. (*Picks up violin.*) And you, whom I have fashioned with such tender care, you must be broken too. (*Stops suddenly.*) What madness!

Suppose some other than Sandro were to win? I could give — No; it is too much — the sacrifice is too great; and yet, by renouncing my work and changing our violins in their cases, it could be easily done. The instruments look precisely alike. Sandro is not musician enough to distinguish between his work and mine when they are tried; and afterward I could tell him. They are going at once to the judges; no one will open them again. She must not weep any more, poor little girl. Come, do it for her sake. (*Changes the violins, putting his own in Sandro's case.*) It is done.

(*Enter FERRARI and SANDRO, C.*)

FERRARI. Come Sandro, Filippo, it is nearly time. Not ready yet?

SANDRO. Yes, quite.

FILIPPO. And our violins too.

FERRARI. I hope, my boys, that one of you will win, and do credit to your master. The rest may resin and scrape, but I am pretty sure the prize is ours. I have just come in, and the people are going in crowds to where the judges meet. You actually breathe the spirit of music. From every dark corner and gable you hear the groaning of strings. Cremona, with this medley of sounds, seems like an orchestra before the curtain rises.

FILIPPO. And it is time for you to be off, for the curtain will soon be up.

SANDRO. Will you follow us, Filippo?

FILIPPO. No; you know how they mock me when I go out. Be a noble adversary and carry my violin with yours; you were not in earnest just now, were you, comrade? Do me this little service.

SANDRO. Very well.

FILIPPO. Thank you. (*Exit SANDRO, L. To FERRARI*) Are you not going to see them crown his work?

FERRARI. Yes, but he has not won the prize yet. You have as good a chance as he.

FILIPPO. I have no chance.

FERRARI. Come, you think too little of yourself. If you are not as straight as a steeple, you do good work, and that is what will win the prize. *(Exit, L.)*

FILIPPO. I need all my courage.

(Enter GIANNINA, C.)

Giannina not gone yet!

GIANNINA. Filippo, I have just come from the church. I went — forgive me, my heart was so full — I went to pray that Sandro still might be successful; but kneeling before Saint Cecilia, I felt that one cannot ask God to be unjust; and I made a vow, whatever comes, to be always the same to you. Forgive me, do you not?

(He kisses her hand, and she goes out, R.)

FILIPPO. How she loves him! Had I been strong and handsome, she would have loved me.

(Enter SANDRO, L., hurriedly, in great trouble.)

SANDRO. Filippo! Filippo!

FILIPPO. What is the matter? Your face is white; what has happened?

SANDRO. It was infamous of me; forgive me, forgive me!

FILIPPO. I forgive you, my friend? For what?

SANDRO. You see — I loved her so much. I was beside myself; I could not bear to be outdone by a rival before her. When I had your violin in my hand, the temptation came to me. Frantic with grief and rage, I yielded, and in the shadow of a neighboring doorway I changed our violins in their cases.

FILIPPO. You —

SANDRO. I carried them so to the judges; but at the moment the expert opened the cases I fled. Revenge

yourself; tell them all what I have done; but if they should not believe you, I will write it, and then I will go away and die; for the shame will kill me, and I cannot stay when she knows.

FILIPPO. I have had no need of revenge. You have brought your punishment upon yourself.

SANDRO. What do you mean?

FILIPPO. The glory of my work I yielded to you, and you have given it back to me.

SANDRO. How could you?

FILIPPO. I had already changed the violins, putting mine in your case.

SANDRO. I cannot seem to understand. Why did you do it?

FILIPPO. Because I adored Giannina, and because it is you she loves. If I have aught to quarrel with you for, it is that you have undone all I did for her sake.

SANDRO. No; I have committed a crime, and I must bear the punishment. Say one word and I will go and never return; and if Giannina forgets me when I give her up, you can make her love you; you alone are worthy. I will go — I must go!

FILIPPO. Stay — obey me!

(Hurrahs and shouts of victory without.)

(Enter FERRARI, C., lifting his hands as if in blessing when he sees FILIPPO. He is followed by the whole guild of VIOLIN-MAKERS, and by two PAGES dressed in the colors of the city, one carrying on a cushion the gold chain; the other, Filippo's violin, ornamented with ribbons and flowers. GIANNINA enters R.)

FERRARI (to FILIPPO). Come to my arms! You are king! Master of the violin-makers! Before all I want to keep my promise at once to the victor. My son, my

successor, come to my heart! But first — I had almost forgotten the golden chain.

(Takes chain and advances to FILIPPO, who takes it from him and puts it around GIANNINA'S neck.)

FILIPPO. It gives me joy to have it, that I may give it to Giannina, praying her to keep it as a favorite jewel when she is the wife of Sandro.

GIANNINA. Dear Filippo!

SANDRO. My brother, you are too good to me!

FERRARI. Stop! Have you taken a vow not to marry, that you give up your chain like this?

FILIPPO. No, good Master, no; but I am going away to carry your renown through Italy. I have had a dream — but that is over, and I shall be happy if you will but regret my going. *(Turning to GIANNINA)* And as the days go on, and near your loved one you help him at his work, if — as at times happens — a string you are holding snaps with a plaintive sound, think then how in this hard farewell I have felt my poor heart break. You are helpless, I know, to make it different; but do not regret that I have loved you.

FERRARI. Ingrate! Do you want my house to be ruined?

FILIPPO. Sandro will not leave you.

FERRARI. This is a wild fancy. You give up fortune and happiness; what have you left?

FILIPPO *(taking violin)*. This only; but it shall console me.

[CURTAIN]

THE DYSPEPTIC OGRE¹

PERCIVAL WILDE

CHARACTERS

THE OGRE

THE OGRE'S COOK

FRANCES

THE MONDAY DINNER

THE TUESDAY DINNER

THE WEDNESDAY DINNER

THE THURSDAY DINNER

THE FRIDAY DINNER

THE SATURDAY DINNER

THE SUNDAY DINNER

THE PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT

OTHER BOY SCOUTS

THE JESTER

Before the curtains part a JESTER, with cap and bells and stick, enters at one side, comes to the centre of the stage, and bows deeply to the audience.

JESTER. Ladies and gentlemen: This is a fairy play: a fairy play all about an Ogre who lived in a Castle in the Calabrian Mountains (wherever they may be) in the Steenth Century. The Steenth Century, by the way,

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began ever so many years ago, and by a most remarkable coincidence, ended exactly one hundred years later. Of course the Ogre is dead now; he died of acute indigestion one day after eating a particularly hearty lunch; but he was very much alive then! Indeed he was!

Now an Ogre is a person who dines ex-clu-sive-ly on human flesh (which is a very bad habit); but this Ogre is not like other Ogres: not at all. Indeed, he might be called an Ogre because nothing but human flesh o-grees with him.

(The curtains part an inch or two, and a LITTLE GIRL taps the JESTER on the back.)

JESTER *(to the audience)*. Excuse me a minute. *(He converses with the LITTLE GIRL in earnest dumb show. She disappears, and he turns to the audience.)* She says I must n't tell you too much about our play, because if I did I might spoil it all. But I must say this: *(with great precaution that the actors behind the curtains shall not overhear him, he whispers to the audience)* Don't be afraid that the Ogre's going to eat *her*! By no means! Of course, I know that it looks as if that were going to happen. But don't let it upset you. *(Very confidentially)* Appearances are deceptive.

(The curtains part once more, and the LITTLE GIRL remonstrates with the JESTER again.)

JESTER. She says I must n't say another word. They're all ready to begin. *(He goes solemnly to the side of the stage, bows to the audience, and raps three times. The curtains part, disclosing a large room with a door at the back, and a large, heavily barred door at the side. Seats himself comfortably.)* This is the larder in the Ogre's castle. It is a very unpleasant castle, with a moat and a drawbridge and a portcullis and sentries, and no hot and cold running water and very old-fashioned plumbing.

But then the Ogre does n't bathe very often, and if he did, he would find the moat much roomier than any bathtub (though not nearly so private); but the plumbing has nothing to do with this play, so it does n't really matter.

This is the Ogre's larder — (*in answer to an imaginary question from the audience he spells out the word.*) l-a-r-d-e-r — and this is inside the Ogre's castle, and all that we can see of the outside is a wee patch of sky through the narrow, barred windows high up in the thick stone walls.

You wonder where that big door leads. Well (*he whispers to the audience again*), in those good old days they did n't have ice-boxes, and the Ogre had to keep his dinner alive until he was ready to eat it; and there is a whole collection of dinners behind that door, waiting for the Ogre to get up an appetite. (*A telephone rings on a kitchen table.*)

Of course, some people will say there were no telephones in the Steenth Century, when all of this happens; but I read a book which was written then, and it does n't say that they did n't have telephones, and if the man who wrote that book did n't know, I 'd like to know who does!

(*The Ogre's COOK, who is fat, and sleepy, and who has been dozing at the big table, wakes up and goes to the telephone.*) This is the Ogre's Cook. You will learn to know her much better later on.

COOK (*who, by the way, is a lady-cook*). Hello! Hello! (*She jiggles the lever up and down.*) What? — Ye rang me, Cintral. (*She hangs up the telephone in disgust.*) "Excuse it, please!"

(*The OGRE enters. He is a little bent gentleman with thick spectacles, who hobbles around with the aid of a cane.*)

JESTER. This is the Ogre. (*The OGRE, proceeding into the room, stops to bow to the JESTER, who returns his bow.*) He is a very polite Ogre.

OGRE (*bows to the JESTER again, and goes to the COOK.*) Where are my pills?

COOK (*producing a bottle containing enormous red and green pills*). There they are, sorr. (*The OGRE empties out two or three.*) Wait a minute; I'll be afther gettin' ye a sup of wather! (*She brings him water.*) There!

OGRE (*swallowing — or appearing to swallow — several pills*). My stomach feels so bad — so bad this morning!

JESTER (*to the audience*). So would yours if you ate what he eats!

OGRE (*to the COOK*). I thought I heard the telephone ring.

COOK. Yez did, sorr.

JESTER. I forgot to say that the Cook is Irish. They had Irish cooks in the Steenth Century, just as they will have Irish cooks in the Steenty-Steenth.

OGRE (*to the COOK*). Well, what did they want?

COOK. 'T was a wrong number, sorr. Bad cess on 'em!

JESTER (*with a wealth of expression*). "Bad cess" is something like measles — only more unpleasant. (*The telephone rings again. The OGRE takes it up.*)

OGRE. Hello! Yes — Yes — (*angrily*) YES! (*With a sudden change of manner, very cordially*) Oh, it's the butcher!

COOK. The butcher!

OGRE. Do we need any meat?

COOK (*counting on her fingers*). I'm afraid we do, sorr.

JESTER. What a whopper! Just wait and see what they've got behind that door!

OGRE (*to the telephone*). Yes; we need some meat.

What have you got that 's nice this morning? — (*To the Cook*) He says he 's got a nice fresh politician. Ugh!

COOK (*earnestly*). Politicians? Don't be afther thryin' thim again, sorr. Th' last wan was so tough 't was all I could do to make broth out of him!

OGRE. And I could n't keep even that on my stomach! (*He turns to the telephone.*) No; no politicians this morning. What else have you got? — (*With great pleasure*) He 's got a poet!

(*The JESTER breaks into uproarious laughter and applause, rocking back and forth overcome with mirth at something humorous which the audience has apparently overlooked. The OGRE and the COOK stop the action of the play to bow appreciatively to the JESTER, who continues to laugh. When he finally quiets down, the play proceeds again.*)

COOK. What does he say he has?

OGRE. He says he 's got a poet!

COOK (*reproachfully*). Now! Now!

OGRE. I love poetry! And I love poets! Particularly fried, with drawn butter and parsley!

COOK. Do yez want to kill yourself entoirely? Ye had a nightmare after ye et the last. Did ye or did ye not? Well?

OGRE (*sadly and reluctantly*). I did.

JESTER. He would have had a Welsh-rabbit dream if Welsh-rabbits had been invented, but this is the Steenth Century, and nobody has discovered them yet.

COOK (*with finality*). No more poets, if ye know what 's best for ye!

OGRE (*to the telephone, sorrowfully*). No; no poets to-day — (*he turns to the COOK again.*) He says he 's got some nice little girls.

COOK. How much?

OGRE. How much? — Forty-eight cents a pound? My, my, you 're dear!

COOK. 'T is the only thing ye can digest.

OGRE. He says they 'll do for broiling.

COOK. Take 'em.

OGRE. I 'd prefer something else for a change.

COOK. An' upset your stomach again? Take 'em, or it 'll be th' worse for ye!

OGRE (*to the telephone*). Can you pick out one? Just one? — Nice? — Fat? — Juicy? — (*He turns to the COOK.*) I think I ought to go to the market and pick her out myself.

COOK. Let me talk to him! (*She takes up the telephone.*) Listen, me bould shpalpeen!

JESTER. "Shpalpeen" is an Irish word, and I don't know exactly what it means.

COOK. Send her up; yis, send her up! An' if she is n't better than th' last, 't is meself will make yez eat her! Yis! Ye 'll have to eat her, even if she sticks in your craw! So there! (*She hangs up the receiver, and turns to the OGRE.*) When I 've finished cookin' her; when I 've got her stuffed with sage and chestnuts, an' roasted to a turn, with a sweet sauce with almonds and rice, my, won't she make your mouth wather!

OGRE (*disconsolately*). I suppose so; I suppose so.

COOK. Ye talk as if ye did n't like th' idea.

OGRE. I don't. I don't like to eat children. I 'd prefer mutton; or beef.

COOK. Ye can't digest thim; an' if ye could, ye would n't be an ogre.

OGRE. I don't want to be an ogre.

COOK (*with finality*). Ye 've got to be an ogre!

JESTER (*turning to the audience apprehensively*). He 's got to be an ogre, or there won't be any play!

COOK (*proceeding to the barred door*). Look what's waitin' for ye! Your Monday dinner!

(*She opens the door, and a LITTLE GIRL enters.*)

OGRE (*peering around*). Where is it? Where is it?

COOK. Right before your eyes!

JESTER. He's so blind he can hardly see her.

OGRE (*finally discerning the LITTLE GIRL, and rising politely*). How do you do, dinner?

MONDAY DINNER (*frightened, but curtsying*). Very well, thank you, sir.

COOK (*introducing other LITTLE GIRLS as they enter*). Your Tuesday dinner. Your Wednesday dinner. Your Thursday dinner. Your Friday dinner. Your Saturday dinner. Your Sunday dinner.

OGRE. How do you do, food?

DINNERS. Very well, thank you, sir.

OGRE. Are you getting enough to eat?

MONDAY DINNER. Oh, yes, sir! Plenty, sir.

OGRE (*turning to the COOK*). Did n't one of them have a cold?

COOK (*indicating the WEDNESDAY DINNER*). 'T was this wan.

OGRE (*hobbling closer*). How do you feel, my dear? Is your cold better?

WEDNESDAY DINNER. Buch bedder! Thagk you, sir.

OGRE (*tragically*). "Buch bedder! Thagk you, sir!" She wants to poison me!

COOK. Wednesday Dinner, change place with Sunday Dinner! There! (*The two girls indicated change places.*) Give yourself th' benefit of th' doubt! Never take a chanst, says I!

OGRE (*cheering up a little as he surveys his collection*). I don't see why we want more meat when we have all of this.

COOK. Ye don't want to eat thim till they 're fattened up, do ye?

OGRE. No; I suppose not.

COOK. Give 'em toime, says I; give 'em toime!

OGRE (*going to the MONDAY DINNER*). Let me feel your muscle, my dear. (*MONDAY DINNER doubles her arm. The OGRE feels her muscle. With great pleasure*) Is that the best you can do?

MONDAY DINNER. Yes, sir.

OGRE. Try hard. Now!

MONDAY DINNER. I'm trying my hardest.

OGRE. And that 's your very best?

MONDAY DINNER. Yes, sir.

OGRE (*excitedly*). Sweet child!

(*He attempts to take a bite out of her biceps.*)

COOK (*stopping him energetically*). Not raw! Not raw!

OGRE (*reluctantly*). I suppose not. But is n't she just too sweet!

COOK. She 'll be much swater fricasseed with Maryland sauce.

(*The JESTER, as before, breaks into hilarious laughter.*)

(*All the performers are pleased, and bow to him.*)

JESTER. Maryland sauce! In the Steenth Century! Maryland sauce!

(*The actors show that they are offended; the JESTER subsides suddenly; the play continues.*)

OGRE (*proceeding to the THURSDAY DINNER*). And you, my dear; let me feel your muscle. (*He feels; then to the Cook*) She 's not very tender.

COOK. She 's only been here a week, sorr.

OGRE. Put her to bed; no exercise; double rations; lots of candy and cream.

COOK. Yis, sorr.

OGRE. Even then we may have to use her for soup

stock. (*He shakes his finger at her.*) I'm disappointed in you, little girl! Disappointed! (*He looks around piteously.*) I'm an old man, and I have n't a good digestion, and what you would do to me! Oh, what you would do to me! (*He collapses into a chair.*) Get me my pills. (*The COOK brings them. He swallows one. Points to the THURSDAY DINNER.*) Take her away! Take them all away! The thought of them is enough to ruin my appetite!

COOK (*to the DINNERS*). Come on, there's a dear. Come on. Come on!

(*She urges them back where they came from.*)

OGRE. Get them out of my sight! Away with them! (*Feebly*) This business of being an ogre is n't what it's cracked up to be!

JESTER (*shaking his head sympathetically*). Of course, he did n't use those words in the Steenth Century; but that's exactly how he felt. (*Addressing the OGRE*) Is n't that true? (*The OGRE nods sadly.*)

COOK (*having fastened the great door, returns to the OGRE, and begins temptingly*). With a bit of allspice, and a dash of lemon, and a little mushroom flavoring —

OGRE (*interrupting*). Ugh!

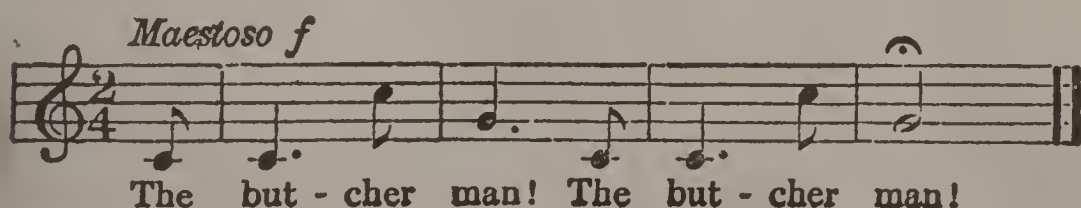
COOK. An' a thick yellow sauce, an' a touch of curry —

OGRE. Ugh! Ugh!

COOK. An' I'll bake some of 'em into a pie, browned on th' top, an' crisp at th' edges —

OGRE. Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

JESTER. He's thinking of the pies his mother used to make. (*A trumpet call outside*)

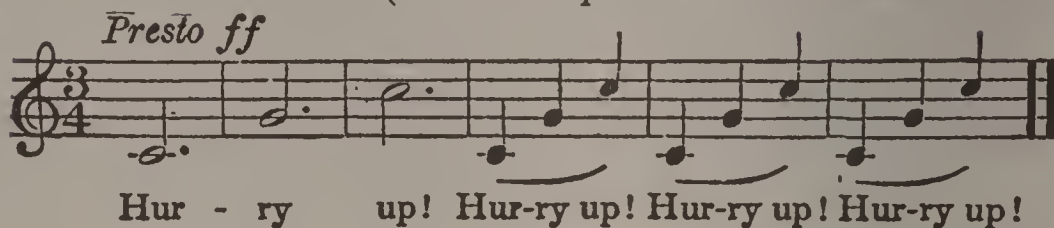


COOK. The butcher!

OGRE (*brightening a little*). The new girl!

COOK. I'll bring her right in!

(*The trumpet sounds a second time.*)



COOK. Take yer toime! Take yer toime! I'm coming! (*She goes out.*)

JESTER. That was the way the butcher announced he was calling in the Steenth Century. In those good old days there was style to keeping house.

(*The trumpet blows a third time: a long and complicated call.*)

Recitativo

ff

I've put her on the dumb-wait-er! I've

f *molto ritard.*

put her on the dumb-wait-er! I've put her on the

p *a tempo sf*

dumb-wait - er! Now hoi - - - st!

JESTER (*after having listened attentively*). In the language of the Steenth Century, that means, "I've put her

on the dumb-waiter. Hoist.” (*The OGRE, who has been sitting at the table disconsolately, rises laboriously, produces a pocket mirror and a comb, and proceeds to spruce himself up. The JESTER, sighing*) The good old days! Ah, the good old days! To-day what housewife would powder her nose to receive a lamb chop?

(*The door at the rear flies open, the OGRE faces about ceremoniously, and the LITTLE GIRL who interrupted the JESTER before the curtains parted stands on the threshold.*)

OGRE. Hello!

FRANCES. Hello!

OGRE (*bowing rheumatically*). Allow me to welcome you to my castle.

FRANCES (*curtsying*). Thank you.

OGRE. Won't you walk in?

FRANCES. Yes. (*She looks around.*) What a queer room this is! Oh, but it's not polite to criticize.

OGRE. It is anything but polite. I think it is a very nice room.

FRANCES. Do you? Well, then, I agree with you.

OGRE (*unable to believe his ears*). What did you say? What did you say?

FRANCES. I said, “I agree with you.”

OGRE (*joyfully*). You agree with me! What beautiful words! You agree with me! How I hope you mean it!

FRANCES. Of course I mean it.

OGRE (*dubiously*). I'll know more about that a little later.

JESTER. He means he'll have inside information.

OGRE (*shaking his head sadly*). It's happened to me so often before: so often! I've met little girls — oh, the dearest children — and they said they'd agree with me, and I thought they meant it. But they did n't. (*He rubs*

his stomach pathetically.) They disagreed with me most violently. Deceitful little wretches!

FRANCES. I hope you won't find me deceitful.

OGRE. I hope I won't, my dear. When I think of what I did for some of those children it almost destroys my faith in human nature! I treated them like royalty; I fed them on the fat of the land; I thought nothing was too good for them! And how did they repay me? They kept me awake nights!

(He hobbles to the table and takes a pill.)

FRANCES *(timidly)*. I don't know if I ought to talk to you.

OGRE. And why not, pray?

FRANCES. We have n't been introduced.

OGRE *(smiling)*. Well, that can be arranged. What is your name?

FRANCES. My name is Frances.

OGRE. Pleased to meet you. Now, is everything all right?

FRANCES. What is your name?

OGRE *(sighing)*. It's so long since anybody has called me by my name that I've almost forgotten it. I'm just the Ogre. But when I was a little fellow, just a shaver —

JESTER *(interrupting)*. An Ogrette, so to speak.

OGRE. My mother used to call me Freddy.

FRANCES. I can't very well call you Freddy, can I?

OGRE. No; but you can think of me as Freddy. You will, sometimes; won't you?

FRANCES. Yes. I promise.

OGRE *(walking about emotionally)*. How that brings back thoughts of the old days! Things were different then! Oh, yes! Things were different. *(Suddenly he stops near her.)* Would you mind? *(He doubles her arm.)* It's all right now that we've been introduced. That's

right. (*He feels her biceps with signs of joy.*) I believe, oh, I do believe that you will agree with me! (*He hastens to the kitchen table and opens a huge diary. He leafs through it, mumbling the names of the days.*) Monday — Wednesday — Friday — A week from Monday: that's it! (*He turns politely to FRANCES.*) How would you like to make a date with me for a week from Monday?

FRANCES. A date? What for?

OGRE. A date for supper.

FRANCES. Don't I get anything to eat until then?

OGRE (*laughing heartily*). How absurd! How perfectly preposterous! How utterly ridiculous! You get something to eat every half hour! Every fifteen minutes, if you want it! Why, you spend the whole day eating! You tell the Cook your favorite dishes, and she does nothing except cook them for you — except when she's cooking for me. And then, a week from Monday, we meet at the supper table. Is it a go?

FRANCES. A go?

OGRE (*correcting himself*). Pardon my slang. I mean, do you accept my invitation?

FRANCES (*after thinking*). Yes; thank you.

OGRE. That's fine! Of course, it does n't really matter whether you accept or not, because you'll be there, anyway. But it's always nicer to do things politely, is n't it?

FRANCES (*without answering*). After Monday; what then?

JESTER. You see! She's getting suspicious!

OGRE (*lightly*). After Monday? The world will go on in the same old way. And you, let us hope (*he sighs blissfully*), will be a sweet memory. (*He strikes a gong.*)

COOK (*entering*). Yis, sorr?

OGRE. Cook, this is Frances. (*They bow to each other.*)

Frances and I have made an appointment for a week from Monday.

COOK. Yis, sorr. I 'll raymember it.

OGRE (*taking the Cook aside*). How will we have her? Stuffed and roasted?

COOK (*shaking her head*). If I 'm not afther makin' a mistake, she 'll do for broiling.

OGRE (*delighted*). You really think so? Well, then, broiling it is. (*He hobbles to the door much more cheerfully.*) I 'm beginning to feel better already. Good morning.

(*He goes.*)

FRANCES (*going to the Cook*). What does he mean by roasting and broiling?

COOK. Don't ye know?

FRANCES. No.

COOK. Ye 'll learn soon enough. (*She goes, locking the entrance door behind her. FRANCES tries the door; it will not open.*)

JESTER. Now she 's getting very suspicious.

(*FRANCES comes back to the centre of the room, plainly worried. She goes to the great barred door, pushes aside the bars and opens it. The DINNERS rush in.*)

FRANCES (*surprised*). Hello!

DINNERS. Hello!

FRANCES. Who are you?

DINNERS. We are the dinners.

I am the Monday dinner.

I am the Tuesday dinner.

I am the Weddesday didder,

— the Thursday dinner — (*a chorus*)

FRANCES. The Monday dinner? The Tuesday dinner? Whatever do you mean?

MONDAY DINNER. He 's going to eat me to-night.

FRANCES (*horrified*). Eat you?

TUESDAY DINNER (*nodding*). And he's going to eat me to-morrow.

FRANCES. Oh!

WEDNESDAY DINNER (*you remember she has a cold*). Yes; ad he's goig to eat me Weddesday, udless she (*pointing to the TUESDAY DINNER*) upsets his stubbig!

FRANCES (*desperately*). I don't believe it! I don't believe it!

MONDAY DINNER. Do you know where you are? This is the Ogre's Castle!

FRANCES. What of it?

MONDAY DINNER. You know what an Ogre is, don't you?

FRANCES. But — but he's such a nice old man. He said he was going to dine with me a week from Monday.

TUESDAY DINNER. Not *with* you; *on* you!

JESTER. What a difference one little word makes!

FRANCES (*terror-stricken*). Dine *on* me? You mean he's going to eat me?

MONDAY DINNER. Of course! He's an Ogre.

TUESDAY DINNER. First he'll keep you here a week, and fatten you.

THURSDAY DINNER. That's what he's doing with all of us.

FRIDAY DINNER. He'll feel your muscle every day.

FRANCES. He's done that already!

WEDNESDAY DINNER. He'll feed you till you're nice (*she has a struggle pronouncing the word*) ad fat ad juicy, ad thed —

FRANCES. And then?

MONDAY DINNER. Your turn will come a week from Monday.

FRANCES (*desperately*). But I don't want to be eaten!

MONDAY DINNER. None of us want to be eaten. But what can we do about it?

FRANCES. I know what *I* can do about it! Go to the door! Listen! Tell me if you hear any one coming! (*The DINNERS rush to the door, FRANCES to the telephone.*) Hello! Hello! — Central, please be quick! — Hello, Central, give me Information! (*She turns to the DINNERS.*) Do you hear anything?

MONDAY DINNER. All right so far!

FRANCES. Hello, Information? Information? — Give me the telephone number of my Fairy Godmother. — No, I don't know where she lives, and I don't know her name. But you know, don't you? — Of course you know! That's what you're there for! — Yes; I'll hold the wire; but hurry! Hurry!

MONDAY DINNER. The Ogre's coming!

FRANCES. Lock the door!

MONDAY DINNER. It's locked already! But he's unlocking it!

FRANCES. Then don't let him in!

(*A key turns gratingly in the lock, but the Dinners hold fast to the knob.*)

MONDAY DINNER. He's trying to open the door!

FRANCES. Hold tight! Hold tight! (*She turns to the telephone excitedly.*) Oh, how do you do, Fairy Godmother? This is Frances. I'm in trouble; terrible trouble. — What? — I don't have to tell you about it? You know all about it already? Oh, you *are* a Fairy Godmother! Now what am I to do? — Yes? — Yes? — I turn my ring twice? And then back once? Oh, thank you! Thank you ever so much! (*She hangs up.*)

WEDNESDAY DINNER. He's gone to get the Cook!

FRANCES. Quick! Hide!

(*The DINNERS rush madly out of sight. The door bursts open; the OGRE and the COOK rush in.*)

OGRE (*very angry*). Who tried to keep me out? (*He peers about and catches sight of FRANCES.*) Did you do it? You could n't have done it all by yourself; you could n't.

FRANCES. Well, if I could n't, I did n't. So there!

OGRE. Be more respectful to your elders! (*He hobbles about the room.*) There's only one of them here. Where are the others?

FRANCES. What others?

OGRE. You know well enough! (*He turns to the COOK.*) See if they're all there! If there's one missing — (*he gasps at the thought*) — if there's one missing, I'll eat you (*he points a finger at the trembling COOK*) even if you're the death of me!

JESTER (*nodding*). And she would be!

COOK (*opening the barred door and counting, terror-stricken*). Wan — three — foive — sivin. None missing, sorr.

OGRE. But there might have been! There might have been! (*He hobbles about the room, glaring at FRANCES.*) Hum! So this is how you repay me for my hospitality! This is how you reward me for my kindness! This is the thanks you give me for the food and shelter which I was ready to provide!

FRANCES. How about the food which I was to provide?

OGRE. That's another matter! Quite another matter! (*He turns to the COOK.*) Light the fire! See that it's good and hot! Get the spit ready! I'm going to do something that I've never done before in my life; I'm going to roast her myself!

(*He turns savagely on FRANCES.*)

COOK (*very much alarmed*). Oh, don't do that, sorr!

OGRE. And why not?

COOK. Ye could never eat her! Roasting's an art! Ye've got to learn how!

OGRE. I'm going to start learning this minute.

COOK (*desperately*). Lave it to me, sorr. Let me do it! (*She beckons anxiously to FRANCES.*) Come along, little girl! Come along!

OGRE (*furiously*). Did you hear what I said? Well, I meant it!

COOK. But —

OGRE (*interrupting at the top of his lungs*). Do as I say!

COOK (*whimpering*). Yis, sorr. (*She turns slowly to the door, very much frightened.*)

FRANCES. No! Stop! (*The COOK stops. Frances turns to the OGRE.*) You're not going to eat me!

OGRE. No?

FRANCES. No!

OGRE. Well, just watch me!

FRANCES. You're nothing but a bogey man in a fairy tale! And fairy tales always come out happily. I've known that ever since I was five.

OGRE (*seizing a huge knife from the table and advancing upon her*). And how are you going to make this one turn out happily?

FRANCES. Just so! (*She raises her hands and turns a ring on her finger. Instantly the lights go out and thunder rumbles and crashes.*)

OGRE (*in the dark*). Where is she? Where is she? Let me catch her! Just let me get my hands on her!

A VOICE. Here I am!

(*The room lights up. But the voice has not come from FRANCES; it has come from a strapping BOY SCOUT who stands, quite fearless, on the spot where she stood.*)

COOK (*gasping with surprise*). Saints in Hiven, how she 's changed!

JESTER (*indicating the OGRE with glee*). He 's too blind to know the difference!

OGRE. Now I 've got you! (*He advances with his knife. As he raises it to strike, the SCOUT knocks it out of his hand.*)

OGRE (*collapsing with astonishment*). She knocked it out of my hand!

COOK (*bursting with laughter*). Indade she did!

OGRE (*incredulously*). A little girl knocked that knife out of my hand! (*He goes to the SCOUT, still unaware of what has taken place.*) If you don't mind, may I feel your muscle?

SCOUT (*smiling and doubling his arm*). Certainly!

OGRE (*feels*). Oh! O-h! O—h—h! (*He sinks helpless into a chair.*)

SCOUT (*pointing to the barred door*). Open that door!

COOK (*gesticulating at the OGRE*). Not unless he says so.

SCOUT. Open that door!

(*There is a terrific hammering on the barred door.*)

COOK. I don't dast!

SCOUT. You don't have to!

(*On the word, the door flies open and a troop of BOY SCOUTS burst into the room.*)

COOK. Saints preserve us!

OGRE (*peering at them fearfully*). Who are you?

SCOUTS. I 'm the Monday Dinner! I 'm the Tuesday Dinner! — the Wednesday Dinner! — the Thursday Dinner!
(*A chorus.*)

OGRE (*rises very slowly, very feebly, and staggers toward them*). If you don't mind? (*He feels the muscle of two or three. Then, very faintly*) I knew this was going to happen some day!
(*He faints.*)

PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT. And now, what are we going to do with him?

SCOUTS. Kill him!

No, killing 's too good for him!

Yes, kill him!

COOK (*hastening to them*). Go aisy, lads! Go aisy! Ye don't think the ould baste (*she points to the unconscious form of the OGRE*) ever really et anybody?

PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT. He never ate anybody? I don't believe it!

COOK (*smiling*). I would n't be afther sayin' it if he could hear me, but just bechune you an' me, lads, he never et anything but what you and I would eat! (*They look at her in astonishment. She continues confidentially.*) 'T was himself that did the buyin', but 't was I that did the cookin', an' what he got on his table — D' ye know what it was?

SCOUTS. No. What was it?

COOK (*with great secrecy*). Irish stew!

JESTER. That 's why his stomach was always out of order!

COOK. Irish stew and Irish stew! Day in an' day out for twinty years! An' every single wan av 'em different! Once — once in a long while 't was roast lamb; but in the main 't was Irish stew, and then, more Irish stew!

ONE OF THE SCOUTS. But he thinks he 's been eating —

COOK (*interrupting*). I can't help what he thinks. He can think what he plases. If he chooses to think he 's been eatin' them little dears (*she points to the barred door and to the room which it discloses*) 't is his privilege! But before I 'd let wan av 'em come to harm, 't is meself would take th' ould baste an' cook him in his own kitchen!

ONE OF THE SCOUTS (*after a pause*). We've all read of ogres.

ANOTHER. Yes.

ANOTHER. Man-eating ogres!

COOK. Sure! Well, I ask ye this; did ye ever read of a man-eating ogre ever eatin' anybody? Think careful before ye speak! Did ye ever read of any foine young hero gettin' fricasseed? Ye did not! (*Triumphantly*) An' for why? 'T was because ivry last wan av th' ogres had an Irish cook, an' because when they served him up an Irish stew, how should himself know if 't was lamb — or beef — or perhaps the loikes of you? (*The OGRE moves feebly.*) Don't let on ye know, lads! It's a trade secret!

PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT. There's one thing you've got to explain.

COOK. An' that is?

PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT (*pointing to the great barred door*). That is his larder, is n't it? It was full of little girls. Now, what's happened to them?

COOK (*scratching her head*). That's a foine question for th' loikes of you to be askin' me!

PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT. Why?

COOK (*perplexed*). Afther th' magic's gone an' changed thim all into you! (*And she points around the circle. The SCOUTS are puzzled. She points to a ring on the leader's finger.*) She had a ring loike that, an' she turned it somehow —

PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT. Turned it?

(*He raises his hand curiously and examines the ring.*)

COOK (*eagerly*). Thry turning it!

(*The PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT turns the ring. Again there is darkness and rolling thunder. But when the light appears again, the Boy Scouts have not vanished.*)

Instead, next to each one stands one of the missing DINNERS.)

COOK (*triumphantly*). Th' magic worked different this time, but there ye are!

OGRE (*rises feebly, and staggers to a chair. He looks around grimly and fastens his gaze upon the COOK*). I heard what you said! I was n't unconscious!

COOK (*terrified*). For th' love of Mike!

OGRE. When I thought I was eating little girls you were really serving me Irish stew? Nothing but Irish stew?

COOK (*trembling*). Y-yis, sorr.

OGRE (*turning to FRANCES and the DINNERS*). I take back all the hard things I ever thought of you! (*He rises slowly.*) Open the doors! Let them go home!

DINNERS. Home! He's going to let us go home! We're not going to be eaten! We're going home!

FRANCES (*who, perhaps, is a little sorry for the OGRE, coming to him gently*). But what are you going to eat now?

OGRE (*smiling*). Do you really want to know?

FRANCES. Yes.

OGRE. I'm going to turn vegetarian!

(The curtains begin to close)

JESTER (*rising*). Stop! Those curtains must not close!

FRANCES. Why not?

JESTER. This is a fairy play. Where's the moral?

OGRE. That's so!

COOK (*scratching her head*). Well, what is the moral?

OGRE. Maybe — maybe — I ate the moral.

(There is a pause while everybody thinks hard.)

JESTER. Well, I'm waiting.

COOK (*with innermost conviction*). The moral's got something to do with Irish stew!

OGRE (*shuddering*). Let 's hope not! (*He swallows a pill hastily.*)

FRANCES (*after another pause*). This is the moral; when you 're in trouble, ask for Information and telephone your Fairy Godmother.

PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT. But what are you going to do if there 's no telephone?

FRANCES. I don't know. Let 's ask the Ogre.

PRINCIPAL BOY SCOUT. Yes; let 's ask the Ogre.

COOK (*breaks into laughter, rocks back and forth doubled up with mirth. Finally, gasping for breath, wiping the tears from her eyes*) G'wan! Ye don't really believe in Ogres?

JESTER (*with a sweeping gesture*). That is the moral!
(*He bows.*)

[CURTAIN]

THE FIFTEENTH CANDLE¹

RACHEL LYMAN FIELD

CHARACTERS

VEDETTI, an old Italian shoemaker

STELLA, his daughter, a seamstress

ROSA, another daughter, aged fourteen

MR. GOLDSTEIN, an unprincipled man, who acts as labor agent for a factory

MISS ROBERTS, an art-teacher in the high school

SCENE: *A small dark room in the basement of a city block. It serves as kitchen, dining- and living-room. A stove occupies most of one wall, and a table, covered with a red cloth and piled with dishes, the centre of the room. Several chairs are drawn up to the table. A window (back centre) faces a line of dingy washing, or some equally uninspiring view. Near this a rocking-chair is drawn close beside a small table which holds a large cardboard box, overflowing with sewing-materials and garments in various stages of completion. A door (back left) is partly open, revealing a tiny bedroom beyond, while still another door leads into the front room, or shop, facing the street.*

When the curtain rises STELLA is seated in the chair

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by the window, her body bent forward to make the most of the fading light, as she sews rows of beads carefully on a dress. The beads catch the light, but her face is in shadow, bent over the work. She is singing snatches of a popular song, and her pronunciation of the words, though careful, still bears a trace of foreign accent. Presently a man's voice calls out irritably in very broken English from the adjoining room.

MAN'S VOICE. Stella, Stella, what for you maka so mooch noise?

STELLA (*calling back*). Just singin', Poppa, like Rosa teach me!

MAN'S VOICE. Singa'? huh! Soun' more lika da ole-clothes man! You wanta drive away ma trade, hey?

STELLA (*cheerfully*). All right, Poppa, I'll stop; I gotta go out now anyways.

STELLA *rises, gathering up her things and putting them away carefully in the box. While she is doing this, the owner of the voice appears in the doorway; an old man, grizzled and bent, in a shirt and an old waistcoat, with a large dark apron tied over baggy trousers. He holds in one hand a shoe he is mending, and in the other the long thread and needle with which he is stitching it. This is MR. VEDETTI, shoemaker, father of STELLA.*

VEDETTI (*eyeing her preparations suspiciously*). What for you go out dis time day? You theenk maybe clock strike seex, not five?

STELLA. Why, Poppa, you don't forget so soon what day eet is?

VEDETTI (*with a shrug*). Work alla same everra day.

STELLA (*hastily*). Sure, I know that, Poppa. Ain't I got the sewin' most done to take back to the shop to-night? (*She goes over to a small mirror hanging on the*

wall, putting on a shabby coat and hat. Her face, as we see it under the light, is an odd mixture, half girl, half woman. It is pale, the eyes nearsighted from much piece-work, and the shoulders rounded from sitting over sewing. Wistful in repose, it lights up quickly as she talks and moves.) You don't forget already about Rosa — that it is her birthday?

VEDETTI. Well, dat don' make it da holiday. No, Meester Cohen he come getta da rent just da same! Next month he say we pay two dollar more. Always he say dat.

STELLA (*sobering*). Maybe I get more work next month; but don't you tell Rosa yet, Poppa, on her birthday. I gotta get the party and the presents ready 'fore Rosa gets back from school.

VEDETTI. She should be back now — why she so late?

STELLA (*smiling*). On Fridays she always stay late that her teacher may show her how to draw better the pictures —

VEDETTI (*crossly*). Pictures?

STELLA (*eagerly*). Such grand pictures she can make, Poppa! She take a pencil and paper and pretty soon it is not a piece of paper any more, but it is a horse, or a dog, or maybe a little house with trees around it, and children playing like you see them run and jump out in the park — any thing she see, and (*with proud awe*) even the things she have never seen, she can make them so you see them, too. Sometimes it most scare me the things she can make with her pencil.

VEDETTI. What good dat do me?

STELLA. Some day she will make the grand pictures, in books maybe — But I must go now, and remember, Poppa, how it's her birthday and she's fourteen — Rosa's fourteen year old.

VEDETTI (*with a slow smile of meaning*). No — I don't forget dat Rosa be fourteen year ole — (*He nods his head slyly to himself.*)

STELLA (*pausing, speaking reminiscently*). Seem like yesterday, she was too little to walk, an' I have to carry her everawhere I go, an' now she go to the high school, an' read the great beeg books, an' write so fast, an' draw the pictures. All day I am so glad because I think how many things Rosa know some day.

VEDETTI (*shaking his head*). Rosa know plenty ting now.

STELLA (*eagerly*). No, no, Poppa, she tell me only yesterday, how next year she learn new ones.

VEDETTI (*grunting unsympathetically*). Humph!

(*As STELLA moves toward the door, she points proudly to a package and a bright-colored knitted sweater, carefully folded on the table.*)

STELLA (*beaming*). I get the presents already — see — (*She holds up the small package.*) A paint-box, with all the colors, and the brushes so fine. Now she won't have to paint only at school; she can do it at home with her own paints.

VEDETTI. What you waste the good money for?

STELLA (*quickly*). So's Rosa can make the pictures here. (*On the defensive quickly*) An' it was my money, Poppa, that I sew extra evenings for. Don't I give you every week the same from what they pay me? What good is it that I work hard sewing the beads on the dresses if I cannot give Rosa the present on her birthday?

VEDETTI (*shrugging again*). Da rent it is raised, an' you spenda money for dese foolishnesses and dat — (*He peers at the gay sweater.*)

STELLA (*proudly*). But this I make for her myself. See — (*She holds up a bright knitted sweater.*) Same as

all the other girls wear to school. (*Pointing to a plate containing a round cake covered with paper.*) And I bake a cake — with sugar on top; (*moving again toward the door*) I go now to get the candles.

VEDETTI. Don' needa candles —

STELLA. Oh, but yes, they bring the good luck. Fifteen candles there must be — one for each year, and one more besides. Rosa, she go to Sadie's birthday party, an' she tell me so. For every year a candle, an' one for the year that is coming — "one to grow on," that 's how they say.

VEDETTI. She grow anyways; candles maka no difference!

STELLA. But Rosa must grow, an' learn all the things she want to know — so I get fifteen candles — one for each year.

(*She goes out through the shop door smiling to herself; she has hardly left before the shop bell sounds, tinkling in the front room. VEDETTI ambles to the door, looks into the next room, beginning to smile ingratiatingly, bowing and speaking to someone in the room beyond.*)

VEDETTI (*politely*). Dat you, Mr. Goldstein? Come-a right in, dis-a way.

(*A short, heavy man, prosperous-looking in a cheap sort of way, appears in the door. His clothes are a bit showy, and his manner is bland and condescending. Despite his name, GOLDSTEIN speaks with no accent other than a cheap street Americanism. VEDETTI addresses him as a superior of whom he is decidedly in awe.*)

GOLDSTEIN (*familiarly*). Hello there! Thought I was n't going to show up, did you? Well, here I am, all right!

VEDETTI. I theenk maybe you change-a your mind about —

GOLDSTEIN (*interrupting*). No, they kept me up to the factory — got to work hard to keep business going these days, Vedetti, hey?

VEDETTI (*nodding*). Yes (*motioning him to sit down*). You sitta down, no one bodder us here, an' I hear if anybody come in da shop.

GOLDSTEIN (*seating himself*). No, Vedetti, I did n't forget you, and our little talk last week, and I've got things all fixed up fine — like I said I would, so 's the little girl can start right in at the works the first of next week.

VEDETTI (*rubbing his hands with satisfaction*). Dat 's good — you speak to the bigger boss?

GOLDSTEIN (*laughing*). Ha, ha! "The bigger boss," that 's a good one! Sure I spoke to him and he told me to go right ahead. 'Course we mostly start the girls in the packing room — they're only green hands at fourteen, but I figured on doing a little better for your Rosy.

VEDETTI (*eagerly*). How mooch she make?

GOLDSTEIN. Well, let 's see — you said she was good at painting, so 's I thought there'd be a place in the finishing room, touchin' up the paper flowers last thing 'fore they go out. — It takes a good eye, and you need to be quick with your hands.

VEDETTI (*eagerly*). Rosa verra quick!

GOLDSTEIN. Yes, we like 'em young there — can't keep 'em at it very long. No, three or four years and they get so 's all the colors look alike, and then we send 'em down to one of the other rooms — packin' or cuttin' out the flowers. But your Rosy 'll be good at it for a while, and we 'll start her right in at ten dollars.

VEDETTI. Ten dollar — a week?

GOLDSTEIN (*with a short laugh*). Sure! What d' you think I meant — a day? It's a good chance for the kid, and it's lucky you told me 'bout her bein' so near fourteen.

(*Here there is a sound of footsteps off stage, and ROSA bursts into the room. We hear her voice calling before she enters, and she does not see the visitor when she first comes in, she is so excited. She is small for her age, sprightly and pretty, dressed cheaply but becomingly. Her hair is down her back, and she seems, if anything, younger than her years. Her face is round, and her eyes are dreamy. It is the sort of face that may easily become beautiful or coarse — it all depends on the next few years.*)

ROSA (*calling*). Stella — Poppa — where are you?

VEDETTI (*to GOLDSTEIN*). Dat's Rosa now.

GOLDSTEIN. She know yet?

VEDETTI (*shaking his head warningly*). No tella her.

ROSA (*entering*). Poppa, where's Stella?

VEDETTI. She go out — come-a back soon, she say.

GOLDSTEIN. Hello, Rosy, ain't you goin' to speak to me no more?

ROSA (*simply*). Hello, Mr. Goldstein, I did n't see you.

GOLDSTEIN (*playfully*). You don't see me because you ain't lookin' for me, hey?

ROSA (*laughing back*). No, Mr. Goldstein, I mean, yes!

GOLDSTEIN (*with a meaning glance at VEDETTI*). Well, I tell you what, Rosy, you're going to see a lot more of me from now on! That so, Vedetti?

VEDETTI (*nodding*). Yes. (*To the girl*) Now, listen. here, Rosa —

ROSA (*breaking in*). Oh, Poppa, I can't — I gotta go back for Miss Roberts, the one who teaches me drawing;

she's coming here to see you and Stella. She said so, soon as class was over, but I run back quick to tell you first.

VEDETTI (*not pleased*). She come-a here — now — what for? (*Searchingly*) You not been bad girl?

ROSA (*quickly*). No, no! Poppa, it's about (*she hesitates and her eyes shine with suppressed excitement*) about a surprise and me — only I told her I would n't tell you first, and I told her how it was my birthday and everything.

GOLDSTEIN. Your birthday — sure — your papa told me how you 're fourteen.

ROSA. Yes. (*Turning again to VEDETTI*) I gotta go back and show her the way. You tell Stella just the minute she comes in so she 'll be all ready — and, Poppa — (*half hesitant, half eager*) won't you put on your coat, Poppa, please, like it 's Sunday, 'cause Teacher 's coming?

VEDETTI. Why should I put it on for her?

ROSA (*turning at the door, and smiling at him*). Please, Poppa — (*To GOLDSTEIN*) Good-bye, Mr. Goldstein.

(*Exit ROSA.*)

VEDETTI (*looking after her*). Rosa verra smart girl —

GOLDSTEIN (*approvingly*). Yep! she 'll do fine in the work — a smart girl like that!

VEDETTI (*grinning*). Dat's right.

GOLDSTEIN. Yes, Vedetti, soon she 'll be bringing you in a pay envelope 'stead of teachers and pictures. (*He points to one of the drawings pinned on the wall.*) Here, you 've got to sign this paper, just to show she 's fourteen all right and you 're willing for her to work. (*He has taken a paper from his pocket which he holds out.*) It 's just a form, you know, and I 'll take her round to the boss myself on Monday, and see she starts in all right. 'Course, maybe she won't make her ten the first week —

they 're kind of slow at first — and we can't pay 'em for what they don't do; figure on their paintin' 'bout two hundred and fifty flowers a day when we 've learned 'em how, but she 'll do better 'n that once she 's broken in to it. (*Taking out his fountain pen*) You sign your name here.

VEDETTI (*reaching out to take it*). Alla right. (*Hearing sound of footsteps in shop*) Dat's Stella (*a little nervously*); I not tell Stella yet — she no like, maybe.

GOLDSTEIN. Oh — h, that 's it, is it? Well, I guess you ain't goin' to let her feelin's stand between Rosa earning good money for you every week. No, sir, you take my advice, and start her right in 'fore she gets any more nonsense 'bout books an' paintin' in her head!

VEDETTI (*motioning him toward shop*). Sure (*urging him into the shop*). Dis-a way. (*Exeunt.*)

(*They have hardly gone into the shop before STELLA enters from it, her arms full of bundles. She stands in the doorway staring after them and her face is tense. The audience should begin to feel that she scents trouble, but that she tries to go on as usual.*)

STELLA takes off her things and begins putting away the bundles, most of which contain food. She lights the gas, and finally takes some small candles from a bag, removes the cover from the cake after she has placed it in the middle of the table, and begins sticking the candles on it. She places each one carefully, counting as she does so under her breath, and in spite of herself she forgets her fear at Goldstein's presence in the shop, and hums a little happily to herself.)

STELLA (*going to the door, and calling*). Poppa, Poppa, come here a minute!

VEDETTI (*shuffling to the door*). Well, what you want?

STELLA (*peering beyond him into the shop*). There is nobody?

VEDETTI (*hastily*). No, but Rosa, she come-a back while you are gone. She say she bring her teacher here soon. (*Shrugging his shoulders.*) What I want with her teacher, when my business is menda da shoe?

STELLA (*her face lighting up suddenly*). Her teacher — come here?

VEDETTI (*nodding*). They be here soon, I theenk.

STELLA (*facing him apprehensively*). Poppa — Mr. Goldstein, he was here just now after I go to get the things?

VEDETTI (*evasively*). Well, maybe he come to see me, yes —

STELLA. If he come — he come because he thinks he can get something from you, Poppa; I know he 's that kind — he would n't never come here less he wanted something off 'n you.

VEDETTI (*crossly*). I tella you he come to see me.

STELLA (*searching his face intently*). He come here to ask you something 'bout Rosa, did n't he?

VEDETTI (*narrowly*). Well?

STELLA (*facing him squarely*). You tell me, Poppa; I know there 's something up — (*almost fiercely*) You don't look like that only when you got something you 're scared to tell me.

VEDETTI (*irately, throwing out his hands*). Santa Maria, can't you leave me alone five minute?

STELLA (*going nearer to him*). You gotta tell me if it 's about Rosa, and I know it is. You gotta tell me; ain't I got the right to know?

VEDETTI. Rosa 's ma girl —

STELLA (*with determination*). And she 's mine, too,

Poppa, same 's yours — Did n't I take care of her since our mother died, an' she a baby an' so little an' sick? Sixteen year ole I was an' Rosa three when you leave Italy and bring us here, an' did n't I take care of her all day when you mend the shoes, and did n't I cook and wash and sew the clothes the best way I could till she get big enough to go to school? And did n't I get the sewing from the dress factory then that I do at home? I got as good a right to Rosa as you got, Poppa!

VEDETTI. Well, it time Rosa go to work, too, an' Goldstein he get good place for her in the factory. He say she will paint the paper flowers —

STELLA (*pleading*). Rosa can't go there; don't you see, Poppa, how she 's gotta have the chance to learn more? I ain't had it, an' you ain't, but Rosa's going to. An' if she go through the high school she don't need to work in a factory — she can work in the fine office, or maybe teach school — think, Poppa, if Rosa be teacher!

VEDETTI (*shaking his head stubbornly*). Two year 'fore she be through high school.

STELLA (*earnestly and persuasively*). But she make more money then —

VEDETTI (*skeptically*). How you know dat? And I needa the ten dollar now everra week.

STELLA. Poppa, listen; you have seen the Ludovitch girls in the next block, and the rest of them that go by every day to the factory. You saw what they were like three year ago when they start the work, — just little girls like Rosa is now, — and you see them come back from work every night, and how they stand hours on the street corners talking, and how they make the red cheeks, and white the nose, and roll the hair up, so — They think of nothing but to go to the picture show each night, or to the beach to dance. You

don't want for Rosa to get like them — an' she will —

VEDETTI. Rosa fourteen — time she go to work —
(*in self-defense*) Da rent it is raised all time.

STELLA (*eagerly*). I'll help you pay the rent, Poppa — maybe not that much every week but I'll take more work. I can sew nights, and Rosa will help, too. Mrs. Swartz say she pay her a quarter every afternoon she takes care of the baby. She'll do that 'stead of staying late for more lessons at school, only don't you say nothin' to her 'bout the factory!

VEDETTI (*stubbornly*). She go to work Monday. Place alla ready; if she don' go now Mr. Goldstein won' help her get another one, an' I lose ma trade with him.

STELLA. You get other trade; an' anyway don't you care more that Rosa have her chance — Two year now and she will be big and know plenty to make more money than Goldstein give her. I don't want her like those Ludovitch girls, Poppa, with their painted faces and their empty heads. I don't want Rosa to be like me neither, and live in a little dark room, an' sew an' sew all day the things for other people to wear, and cook and eat and sleep like this — (*she gives a quick gesture that takes in the room*) or have the great big machines making their noises round her so she can no longer make the pictures out of her head because her head it is too tired to have anything in it but the noise of those machines.

VEDETTI (*crossly*). Stella, listen here — it don' do no good that you talka like dis — Rosa got to leave high school. Earn ten dollar everra week so we pay da rent, and I get bigger shop and maybe some day buy tenement justa like Meester Cohen.

STELLA (*fiercely*). But what good that be to Rosa —

then — when she cannot make the pictures any more
Better that you give her to graduate from high school —
and she help you then, she —

VEDETTI (*breaking in angrily*). I tella you dat I signa
dat paper an' she go to work.

(*Here there comes a sound of footsteps and voices in
the shop, and ROSA's laugh. STELLA turns on her
father quickly.*)

STELLA. They 're coming — don't you say nothin' to
her — not on her birthday. (*Fixing him with her eyes,
so that he shifts uneasily under their intensity*). You hear
me, Poppa; don't you say a word to her 'bout this!

VEDETTI (*grudgingly*). Well, maybe I don' to-night.

(*ROSA and MISS ROBERTS enter from the door leading
to the shop. The latter is a woman in the thirties,
simply dressed, but in good taste. She is direct and
sympathetic in her manner toward them, particularly
when she speaks to Rosa and to Stella.*)

ROSA (*beaming*). Teacher, this is Stella, my sister, like
I told you takes care of me. And here's Poppa, Miss
Roberts. (*Her face falls as she notices that he is still in
his shirt sleeves. Then she pulls him a little aside and
speaks softly to him.*) I'll go get your coat, Poppa, now.
(*ROSA slips out.*)

MISS ROBERTS (*pleasantly, pretending not to hear this
aside*). I'm so glad you 're both in, for I've been want-
ing to come and tell you how much everyone over at the
high school thinks of your Rosa.

STELLA (*her face lighting up at this*). Rosa, she likes
all her teachers, but she talk most 'bout you, cause you
teacha her to make the pictures.

(*ROSA returns with the coat, urging VEDETTI into it,
though he does so under protest, his shoulders ex-
pressing what he does not say in the way of disgust*

and unwillingness to comply. MISS ROBERTS, though evidently taking in and being amused by this bit of play, goes on as if nothing out of the ordinary were happening during the call.)

MISS ROBERTS. And there's something I've come especially to see you about; is n't there, Rosa?

ROSA (*after successfully accomplishing the coat business*). I thought I'd just have to tell them, Miss Roberts, but I did n't!

STELLA (*eager to be hospitable*). You'll sit down and I'll make you the cup of coffee — yes? — or maybe Poppa will get out the bottle of wine his friend in the country make from his own grapes?

MISS ROBERTS. Oh! thank you, but I must n't stay long enough for that. I'll just sit down here and show you what we've brought.

(*She opens her bag and takes out a small box. ROSA hovers over her excitedly.*)

ROSA. Look, Stella! Look, Poppa! It's all silver and I won it for a prize!

VEDETTI (*showing interest for the first time*). Money? You maka da money?

ROSA. No, it's a medal for drawing!

STELLA (*breathless, almost forgetting the shadow of the factory hanging over them*). Rosa she win it all by herself? For the pictures she make?

MISS ROBERTS. Yes; and next year she's going to win the gold medal, we hope. She's worked hard, and we all think she has real talent in these fingers of hers. (*She takes the girl's hand affectionately in hers.*)

STELLA (*her arms about ROSA*). Did n't I tell you so, Poppa, just now?

VEDETTI (*shortly*). Humph! medal!

MISS ROBERTS (*nothing daunted by his attitude*). I

wanted to bring it myself and tell you how pleased we all are. And we want to give Rosa a special chance next year to work after hours in the advanced class, the one that will fit her for commercial designing.

ROSA (*putting in a word eagerly*). I'll learn to make pictures for the wall papers and cloth and dresses, and how to draw for the magazines maybe.

MISS ROBERTS. And if she does as well in that class as she's been doing this year, one of the big firms that keep in touch with us will have a good place waiting for her in its art department. In a few years she'll be making a good salary, and if she goes on studying nights at the art school there's no reason why she should n't do really big things some day. She has the ability; it's just a question of these next two years, and what she learns to do in them.

STELLA (*her face filled with apprehension*). Two years — she can do so much in them?

MISS ROBERTS. They're the most important ones. I'm sure you understand how everything depends on them. I can see you do, and that you'll do anything to help your sister.

STELLA. I would do anything — anything — for her; but it's this way, I — (*Here ROSA, who has been lighting a second gas jet at the other side of the room, comes forward, cutting STELLA short.*)

ROSA (*happily*). Is n't it fine, sister, all Miss Roberts says I'll learn to do? And look at the medal! (*Holding it proudly under the light*) All silver, Poppa; and, see, it's got my name on this side!

VEDETTI (*taking it in his hand and weighing it critically*). Can't tell if it be realla silver, if you don' bite it — so — (*He starts to do this when ROSA takes it again.*)

MISS ROBERTS. And think of all it stands for! Are n't

you proud to have your Rosa get the second prize, Mr. Vedetti? She's one of the youngest in the class, too.

STELLA (*proudly, hugging ROSA, though she is very near to tears*). Rosa have always the pictures in her head, that the big girls they don't see!

ROSA (*chatting happily*). And I'll get work in a store and study, and have my pictures in books some day, just like a real artist, won't I, Miss Roberts?

MISS ROBERTS (*with a quick look at STELLA*). I hope so, Rosa. (*To STELLA.*) But I must n't stay any longer; it's growing dark; I only came to bring the medal and tell you about it. Rosa said it was her birthday, and I wanted you to know how — (*she hesitates*) how things stand, and that we want to help her have a good start. We can't bear to see talent wasted in factories and behind counters, and it happens so often at fourteen, when just two years more would make a difference in all the rest of their lives.

STELLA (*despairingly*). Why don't the law say sixteen then instead of fourteen? (*Suddenly, her face lighting, she turns to the teacher hopefully.*) Miss Roberts, maybe, maybe it does say so now? (*Her voice is tremulous with hope.*)

MISS ROBERTS (*shaking her head*). No, it does n't say so, Stella — not yet.

STELLA (*pleading*). Oh, Miss Roberts, can't you tell those peoples that make the laws how it is?

MISS ROBERTS (*slowly*). Some day perhaps things will be different —

STELLA (*throwing out her hands with a little hopeless gesture*). But then it is too late — Rosa will be grown up.

ROSA (*catching at some of her words*). Too late for what, sister?

MISS ROBERTS (*to STELLA*). I know you 'll remember what I said. I can see how much you care, and I 'll come again. I must go now — Good night. (*She takes STELLA'S hand.*) Good night, Mr. Vedetti. (*He grunts something in return.*)

ROSA (*eagerly*). I 'll go with you to the corner and show you where to take the car.

(*With another word of good night MISS ROBERTS goes out preceded by ROSA. STELLA takes a step toward her father, and makes a last stand.*)

STELLA. Poppa, you see it 's like how I told you it was. Ain't you goin' to let her stay on?

VEDETTI (*throwing up his hands*). Santa Maria in Paradiso! No! No! No! Is it not enough that I hear that woman talk all time same as you? If you aska me dat again, I tell Rosa to-night, on her birthday!

STELLA. Don't you do that! You promised not to, Poppa, but — but —

(*She tries to go on but she cannot, and VEDETTI shuffles out to the shop, pulling his coat off as he goes, and muttering to himself half under his breath. STELLA tries to go on fixing the cake on the table, and arranging the little gifts, but she grows absent, staring before her, hopelessly. Then ROSA comes in again, glowing from the visit. She runs to STELLA happily.*)

ROSA. Oh, Sister, is n't it grand to have a medal on my birthday? It 's just fine to be fourteen! (*Seeing the cake and crying out with joy*) Oh, it 's a cake, just like Sadie's, with pink candles on top! (*STELLA begins lighting them one by one, and ROSA counts them gleefully as she does so.*) One — two — three (*and so on to fourteen with eager pleasure.*) And another to bring good luck! Fifteen candles — there 's one to grow on!

VEDETTI (*entering and hearing her words*). What you say — grow on?

ROSA. Yes. Oh, Stella, I can grow a lot next year on that candle!

STELLA (*breaking down*). No — no, I don't like that candle — I 'm afraid for what you grow into — maybe —

[CURTAIN]

THE BELLMAN OF MONS¹

DOROTHY ROSE GOOGINS

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

THE BELLMAN OF MONS

JACQUES } two villagers, but with a difference: Jacques,
ANTOINE } a gay-hearted tease, Antoine, a kindly philosopher.

MARKET-WOMAN, a superstitious, gossip-loving creature

DAME PEYÉ, a worthy matron

ANNETTE, her little girl

FIRST PEASANT WOMAN

SECOND PEASANT WOMAN

TOWN CRIER, a bantam rooster of a man

MONSIEUR GRUYEAU, a Tartuffe with riches of his own

MOTHER of Jules

GRANDFATHER OF JULES, a cowherd

JULES, a little apprentice-musician

MAYOR OF MONS, well-meaning, but lacking in imagination

A peasant crowd is needed in the first Act and in the last Act. The costumes are of simple peasant type, except those for the Town Crier and for Monsieur Gruyeau. The former is dressed gaudily, the latter more sombrely, but impressively — as befits the first citizen of a thriving village.

¹ For permission to produce, address Miss Dorothy Rose Googins, 24 Langdon Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

ACT I

SCENE: *Market-place in ancient Mons years ago — a little cobblestone square, surrounded by gay-colored peasant shops on two sides and the cathedral front on the third (stage right). In the centre of the square a short flight of stairs leads up to a wooden platform, which is used by the town crier on ordinary days, and by the mayor on gala occasions. On a post at the corner of the platform a notice is tacked. Before the shops are market stalls and awning shelters, under which vegetables, fruits, flowers, and other wares will soon be displayed; for it is just daybreak of market-day as the curtain rises. A cock crows in the distance; the scene is peaceful in the morning light. Off stage to the right we hear the mellow clanking of a bell and the weird cry of the bellman.*

Enter the BELLMAN OF MONS, a gnarled little old man, with a pale, ghostly face. He wears a faded peasant costume of cold silver gray — pantaloons, threadbare smock, kerchief — and a gray cap, set on his long gray hair, which hangs like cobwebs over his bent shoulders. His thin old legs are clad in gray stockings, and his colorless leather shoes make no noise as they tread the cobblestones. He is an unearthly figure, more shadow than man. His very voice is different from the voices of ordinary men: it is cold and remote, like a sound through night fog. In one hand he carries the old bell which he clanks intermittently to keep time with his chant.

BELLMAN.

Break of day and all is well,
I cry out to help my bell;
Up, good souls, the night ghosts flee;
There is no flight for ghosts like me.
The Dawn rides swift to scatter fears,
Lo! I've seen dawn a hundred years!

(He moves slowly across the stage, and reaches the centre near the platform as he finishes his chant. He turns and faces the cathedral, staring at it grimly, then he raises his clenched fists above his head, still grasping the bell in one hand, and cries:) A hundred years! (His arms drop slowly; his head bows. He murmurs:) A hundred years! (He sinks to his knees in prayer before the cathedral.)

(Enter JACQUES and ANTOINE, two rosy villagers carrying produce for their stalls, in time to hear the BELLMAN'S last words. They eye him, eye each other, shrug their shoulders, and set their baskets down before neighboring stalls on stage left, opposite the cathedral.)

JACQUES *(pretending to shiver violently)*. Brr! A hundred years! The old one still sings that story. He gives me the shivers, he does, with his queer notions and his haunted face.

ANTOINE *(nods, sees the notice on the platform post, and steps over to read it)*. Hullo! Trial-day is this day week!

(JACQUES leaves the stacking of his vegetables. The BELLMAN rises quickly and moves near the two.)

BELLMAN. When is Trial-day — when?

JACQUES *(not unkindly)*. A hundred years from to-day, old one. *(ANTOINE laughs.)*

ANTOINE. No, listen *(reading the notice)*: “Be it known to the good people of Mons that Friday of the third week in September is set by Town Council as Trial-day. Any soul who, on that day, between the hours of sunrise and sunset, can bring forth music from the organ of Mons Cathedral — silent by reason of the curse at its building now these hundred years —”

JACQUES *(waving his hand toward the BELLMAN)*. Listen to that, Bellman; your “hundred years” seems to be the watchword of the morning.

BELLMAN. May it be the watchword of my morning, after the long night has passed!

(JACQUES and ANTOINE look at him and shrug their shoulders. JACQUES taps his forehead meaningly; ANTOINE nods.)

ANTOINE (*reading*). “— shall merit and win the reward of a cottage and holding and a bag of gold as big as a man’s two fists.”

JACQUES (*holding up his fists*). A good winning, that! The prize gets bigger every year.

ANTOINE. Town Council is safe in voting it so. There’s no one can break the curse. Are we better than our fathers, that we should do what for a hundred years they have failed?

JACQUES. No, no! Yet, think of it, a hundred Trial-days, — come this, — all failures! You’ve seen a few of those, eh Bellman?

BELLMAN. All of them.

JACQUES. So? (*lifting his eyebrows*) And, pray, how old were you when they carried you to the first?

BELLMAN. As old as I am now.

(ANTOINE and JACQUES look at each other and laugh.)

JACQUES. Then you knew the old fellow who built the organ — yes? Perhaps you helped him count his money-bags over — the money-bags that paid for the organ out of the pockets of the poor. How many were there, Bellman? (JACQUES is enjoying his joke.)

BELLMAN. There were ten of large gold pieces, and three of — (*wildly throwing his hands up before his face*) What am I saying! You are joking with me!

ANTOINE. Yes, only joking, old Bellman, and not very kind joking at that. Eh, Jacques?

(*He lays his hand on JACQUES’ shoulder.*)

JACQUES (*suddenly*). True. Hm — ten bags — what

if the Bellman is right? If the old fellow did have ten, he must have loved music much to part with them.

ANTOINE. More than ten bags, Jacques, he parted with his own soul to build that organ. (*The BELLMAN has drawn slowly back toward the cathedral, has mounted the two steps, and stands, like a dog driven to shelter, huddled in the corner against the closed doors.*)

JACQUES. Well, he paid dear for an empty teapot (*laughing*). A good joke on his ghost, don't you think, Antoine? Mister Mayor of Mons says to the Evil One, some hundred years ago (*acting out the scene*), "Good-day, sir, what will you take for the fairest organ in Belgium?" "That is cheap, sir, cheap," says the Evil One; "I'll take your soul." "Fair enough," says the Mayor. "Go to work!" So the Evil One leads him to the peasant farms. "There sir," says he, "the land is fair, the people rich; tax, sir; the organ is yours." And so he taxed — ten bags of gold, eh, Bellman? (*The BELLMAN starts as if stabbed, and answers in a hoarse voice.*)

BELLMAN. And three of silver.

JACQUES (*smiling*). And three of silver. And the day dawned when the organ stood ready. Then came the Evil One into Mons, striking fire with his hoofs on the cobbles, and lashing his tail till the sparks flew. "Come, sinner," said he, "I have called for you." "Wait, sir, oh wait," begged the Mayor; "I must first hear the voice of my organ." "Voice!" shouted the Evil One, "It has no voice!" And his laugh sounded like wild horses on a bridge at night. "Voice!" he howled again, choking for laughing, "Your soul is the voice of that organ! You bought the body, but you lost the soul. Come!" And there was a cracking of flame and a roar of wind, and the square of Mons was empty, and the organ as dumb as a stone.

ANTOINE (*slapping JACQUES on the back*). You are a prince of story-tellers, Jacques, and a fine fellow, when you curb your bitter tongue. Come, we must to work, Trial-day or no.

(*They return to their stalls. The BELLMAN sobs and falls to his knees, praying again on the cathedral steps.*)

ANTOINE (*starting toward him*). Come, old one, have we hurt you by our foolishness? What is wrong?

BELLMAN (*turning fiercely and facing them*). Someone must play the organ of Mons!

JACQUES (*at his vegetable table*). Must?

BELLMAN. Must.

JACQUES. So-o. (*He runs his hands over his vegetables, imitating the motion of organ-playing, and sings.*)

My Kiki is a wise little dog,
She sings bow, wow, when pleased;
But when she howls yip, yip, yip-yip,
Good — then I know she's teased!

(*The BELLMAN puts one hand up before his face, and rushes off stage right with a noiseless, flitting movement, like a shadow vanishing suddenly from a wall.*)

ANTOINE. Nay! Jacques, you are unkind.

(*Enter, stage right, a MARKET-WOMAN, who heads for the stall, centre stage in back.*)

MARKET-WOMAN. What ails Bellman? He passed me so swift on the road, the air scarce moved as he went.

JACQUES. Oh, we've been talking of Trial-day, come next Friday —

MARKET-WOMAN. Ah-h.

JACQUES. And he's somewhat upset.

MARKET-WOMAN. Trial-day does always upset him. He's a queer one. (*She begins to pile her vegetables; then wiping her hands on her apron, she steps forward*

eagerly, and speaks in a low ecstatic voice, loving of gossip.) Some say he's a ghost, held to earth until the organ speaks! And some say he's the voice of the organ itself, waiting to be set free.

ANTOINE. No knowing what he is or why he's here — no more than what we are or why we're here.

JACQUES. True. But it's plain he has some unnatural reason for wanting to hear that organ played.

MARKET-WOMAN. Perhaps it will be played this year. Who can tell? Monsieur Gruyeau has been practising on the organ he had built in his house special for the purpose, since last Michaelmas. He may win.

JACQUES. Old Gruyeau will try for the reason I would try — the gold.

ANTOINE. Then he will lose. It is n't love of gold that will set the soul of that organ free.

MARKET-WOMAN (*going back to her work*). Maybe you're right. But Gruyeau'll be the first to try.

(*Enter DAME PEYÉ and her little daughter ANNETTE, stage left.*)

JACQUES. Some truffles here?

(*DAME PEYÉ goes to his stall. ANNETTE looks longingly at the flowers on ANTOINE'S table, and begins to finger them. Enter two PEASANT WOMEN, stage right, and bargain in pantomime with the MARKET-WOMAN.*)

ANNETTE. See the flowers Master Antoine has, mother. I want some.

DAME PEYÉ. Be still, child! A measure of mushrooms — and —

ANNETTE. Oh, I do want some flowers!

DAME PEYÉ. You're a bad child, always wanting what is n't yours.

(*ANNETTE stealthily takes two flowers. ANTOINE sees*

her, comes out from behind his stall and stands looking down at her in a kindly manner. She puts her hand, clutching the flowers, behind her back, and looks down guiltily.)

ANTOINE. Well, little one?

ANNETTE. I want some. They're pretty.

ANTOINE. Yes? Well? *(He continues to look at her.)*

ANNETTE. I—I took them. *(She slowly brings her hand out from behind her, and stares at the flowers in dismay. In her excitement she has crushed the fragile petals hopelessly.)*

ANTOINE. Well — are they pretty?

ANNETTE. No, not now.

ANTOINE *(taking two fresh ones)*. But these are. See I give these to you. *(ANNETTE flashes him a look of penitent gratitude and buries her face in the blossoms.)*

MARKET-WOMAN *(to the two PEASANT WOMEN and DAME PEYÉ)*. He's like that — queer. Ugh! Fairly gives me the shudders to hear his bell clank, and see him flit by my window at night, silent-like. And they do say *(the women lean together)* he casts no shadow! *(The women lift their hands in amazement.)*

JACQUES *(calling as he hears the last of the conversation)*. What? Old Bellman? He's daft now over Trial-day's coming. Says someone *must* play the organ this year.

DAME PEYÉ. Well, it's near time someone did. It's a blot on the town, having a curse on its organ. Seems like we can't hold our heads as high as we might.

FIRST PEASANT WOMAN. They ought to tear down the organ, so they ought, and build a new.

SECOND PEASANT WOMAN. Monsieur Gruyeau has been practising night and day.

ANTOINE. He will fail.

JACQUES. To hear you talk, Antoine, one would think you were sure of winning, yourself.

ANTOINE. Oh, I'm not trying. It will be a hand other than mine, and a heart the world has n't touched, that will make music in Mons Cathedral.

MARKET-WOMAN (*looking down the road, stage left*). Here comes the Town Crier, and a crowd flocking after him.

(*Enter TOWN CRIER, followed by peasants, crying "Way, Way," "The Town Crier," "Listen," "Hear," and so on. He is a pompous, red-faced, little man, dressed more ostentatiously than the other villagers. He mounts the platform, strutting like a turkey cock, and gesticulates grandly for silence. The BELLMAN has entered with the crowd, and stands at stage right, in front of the cathedral.*)

TOWN CRIER. Friends, I have a most indigenous and contumacious announcement to deliver —

CROWD. Hear! Hear!

TOWN CRIER. Silence is a perquisite essential! His Honor, the Mayor, has hereby instructed me to divulge the news concerning our annual Trial-day — the trial which is to bring forth now or never the champion musician, who will seduce music and melody from that long silent, dumb, and voiceless instrument — the organ of Mons Cathedral!

CROWD. What news! — Tell us! — News, news! — Hear, listen to the Crier!

JACQUES. What mean you, "now or never"?

ANTOINE. Aye, tell us your meaning.

MARKET-WOMAN. There's news, there's news! Something's going to happen!

TOWN CRIER. S-i-l-e-n-c-e! How can I fittingly and fallaciously address you when you squeal like pigs

at a truffle-hunt! His Eminent Honor, the Mayor, has decided and designated to have the organ of Mons Cathedral torn, ripped, and razed to the earth — by “razed” I mean deëlevated — if and provided that no musician be found, after suitable trial on this day week, who can bring music from the organ of Mons, before the sun sinks beyond yon grandiloquent hills!

CROWD (*turning, one to another*)

(1) No!

(2) After a hundred years!

(3) Torn down! The organ of Mons!

(4) A week from to-day!

(5) The last Trial-day!

(6) Impossible!

(*This announcement has the effect of a blow on the old BELLMAN who has been standing on the edge of the crowd. He rushes forward, hands clasped.*)

BELLMAN. No. No! It must not be torn down! Give me one more chance! Wait until next year or the next! Surely someone will come who can play the organ of Mons! It *must* be played before it is torn down!

TOWN CRIER. Why, what difference does it make to you, Old Bellman?

BELLMAN (*beating his hands together*). I *must* hear the organ of Mons! One hundred years — (*moaning to himself*) it is enough to pay.

TOWN CRIER (*aside to the crowd*). He is daft!

(GRUYEAU, *a florid, haughty man with a smooth insinuating manner and a caressing voice, steps importantly out of the crowd.*)

GRUYEAU. Way there, my good man, and silence! I, Monsieur Gruyeau, an humble citizen of this illustrious town, approve of His Eminent Honor the Mayor's decision.

CROWD. (1) Bravo!

(2) Good for Monsieur Gruyeau!

(3) No curse on this town!

(4) Gruyeau is right!

GRUYEAU (*waving his hand for silence*). And what is more, if no musician is found during the trial on this day week, — I say, *if*, for perchance some hand has already been chosen by Heaven to free the dumb organ, cursed by the greed and injustice of its builder — er — ahem, I, myself, shall try my humble skill, — if the trials prove fruitless, then I, Augustin Gruyeau, will generously contribute toward the tearing down of the organ and the building of a new one.

CROWD.

(1) Excellent!

(2) Noble Monsieur Gruyeau!

(3) Generous citizen!

(4) Bravo, bravo — a splendid offer!

(5) Truly generous!

(6) He deserves to win at Trial-day.

BELLMAN. Wait, wait, I beg! It is too soon. I have found no one. You will all fail — you, Monsieur Gruyeau, with the rest. (*Murmurs of protest from the crowd*) The hand that brings music to Mons Cathedral must be guided by a heart untouched by selfishness of this world. Wait, I beg!

ANTOINE. Did I not say so, Jacques? (*The CROWD point meaningly to their heads; some laugh, others frown.*)

GRUYEAU. Don't interfere, old man, in the conclave of your betters. My words stand (*to the crowd*) in spite of this painful interruption.

BELLMAN. Then I warn you, poor hypocrite of a man that you are, with your little soul shaking naked under the covering of your big body, don't build with *that*

money of yours; give it back to the poor, where you got it; or there will be two Bellmen in Mons, and you'll have a long time to regret!

GRUYEAU. What! What! Am I to be insulted by an idiot! The man is mad! He implies that I — why, it is outrageous!

CROWD.

(1) Ridiculous! Outrageous!

(2) The old Bellman is daffy!

(3) He is insane!

(4) To insult good Monsieur Gruyeau!

(5) Unthinkable!

(6) Like as not Gruyeau, himself, will play a tune.

(7) Good, generous Monsieur Gruyeau!

TOWN CRIER (*once more assuming mastery*). So be it, worthy people. And kind and illustrious Monsieur Gruyeau, in behalf of His Eminent Honor the Mayor, I extend gratifications and acceptances of your most elegant offer. If the trials on Trial-day prove in vain, then is the organ of Mons to fall as silent as it has stood these hundred years. (*The BELLMAN groans.*) Come, contestants, sign here for Trial-day, Monsieur Gruyeau first!

(*The CROWD closes in about the platform. The BELLMAN sinks to his knees in prayer on the steps leading up to the cathedral. Curtain falls.*)

ACT II

SCENE: *The interior of a cowherd's cottage. A low-raftered, rough-hewn room with a large, glassless casement — opening in the centre of the back wall — through which a roadway and the suggestion of mountains may be seen in the sunset light. A rough bench extends along*

the wall under this window. At the left of the window is a door, opening on to the road. Down stage left is another door leading into the sleeping-quarters of the cottage. Evidently the room serves as kitchen, dining-room, and living-room, for over the fireplace in the right wall is a crane, from which a steaming kettle hangs. Garlic, corn, and other drying vegetables festoon the rafters. A cowherd's stick leans against a stool near the door. A table stands down stage left centre. As the curtain rises, Jules's GRANDFATHER, the old cowherd, is seated on the settle before the fireplace, smoking his pipe. He is a very old man, querulous, and pathetically childish. His daughter, Jules's MOTHER, a sweet-faced peasant woman of about thirty, is standing at the table, peeling potatoes for the evening meal. There is an air of peace and homely beauty about the scene.

MOTHER (*singing*).

The evening breeze is blowing cool,
The vesper bell chimes sweet,
The little children from the school
Turn home their wayward feet.

Come, come, little ones, come,
Mother is waiting for you —

(*She looks over her shoulder toward the door.*) Near time for Jules to be back from the musicker's. The sun's touched the pasture edge.

GRANDFATHER. Always the musicker's! You should have let Jules be 'prenticed to a good cowherd, as his father was before him, and his grandfather 'fore that — and all the lads of the valley. There's naught like the tending of cattle to bring out the father and mother in a boy. But musicking — what good's that to the lad? 'Prenticing him to an organ-master — Bah!

MOTHER. I know, father; but he 's a good lad, and a handy one, you 'll allow. Many a time he 's brought in your wandering herd for you, after his day's work.

GRANDFATHER (*rising*). I know, Jeanne, my hand 's getting old at my trade. The heifers don't seem to follow the bell-cow as they used to do. But I 'm a handy one yet; and if I do fail — why, all the more reason the boy should tend to the herd himself, and not be walking the miles to work for a musicker!

MOTHER (*going to the cupboard, in the wall stage left, and pouring out a cup of milk*). Here, father, a sup of milk will put strength in you for the evening's rounding-up. Mind you bring them all in — Dione and all — to-night. The boy will be too weary to hunt your heifers when he comes home. He does it too often for such a bit of a lad.

GRANDFATHER (*drinking the milk and wiping his mouth on a red handkerchief*). Thank'ee, daughter. (*He walks stiffly to the door, takes his stick, and goes out.* MOTHER, *humming the while, puts the potatoes on to boil. The BELLMAN passes the window on the road, and stops to knock on the door post.*)

MOTHER. Good even, sir. How can I serve you?

BELLMAN. . Good even, housewife. I 'm on my weary way to Mons, and would rest a while on your settle if you don't mind.

MOTHER. Come in, and welcome! A drink of fresh milk? (*She pours out a cupful, which he accepts, bowing his thanks; but when she turns back to her work at the table, he pours the milk out of the window.*) And what is the going-on at Mons?

BELLMAN (*sighing*). The Trial-day, to be sure — the Trial-day to make music come from the organ of Mons.

MOTHER. Ah, yes, I 've heard tell of the curse on the organ of Mons. A hundred years it 's been silent, they

say. It scarce seems the stillness will ever be broken. There are few great musickers in the land now. My son's master has tried these fifteen years; but he's old, and won't be traveling to Mons again. Perhaps next year, or the one following, my Jules will be big enough and skilled enough to try for the great prize.

BELLMAN. Next year or the one following will be too late, good woman. The organ of Mons is to be torn down, pipe by pipe, if to-morrow's Trial-day is unsuccessful.

MOTHER. So-o — I am sorry to hear it. I had hoped Jules would have a chance. He has never even seen a Trial-day. Last year he was to go, but his master's wife took ill and Jules stayed to tend her while the musicker went to try for the prize. He's a good-hearted little lad, my Jules. (*She is setting the table as she talks. The BELLMAN has seated himself on the settle by the fire.*)

BELLMAN. And somewhat of a musician, himself, you say? Perhaps — (*A light breaks over his face.*) I should like to take your lad to Mons with me this evening, goodwife, and let him have his try to-morrow with the others at making the silence sing.

MOTHER. Oh, would you, sir? It would be a fine sight for my little Jules. And perhaps he'd have a chance at the organ? (*The BELLMAN nods.*) He's young for that, but he would love the trying. If only he hurries home! (*She goes to the door and shades her eyes with her hand.*) Not over the hill yet. (*She goes back to her table-setting.*) You'll stay and sup with us before you go?

BELLMAN. Thank you, no, goodwife. I'm not as hungry for food as I was once. But I'll wait for the boy's eating if he comes soon. There's short time now; it's a long way to Mons; we'll not reach there now much before sunup. I travel fast alone, but with the lad —

MOTHER. Not eat? You 're a queer one! But you 've a good heart.

BELLMAN. There was a time you could n't have said that of me.

MOTHER (*listening*). Ah! There, I hear my Jules whistling now. (*She goes to the door. Whistling is heard off stage, presumably down the road, stage right. JULES, a little boy of ten, passes the window and enters the door.*)

JULES. Mother! (*He snatches off his cap, throws his arm about MOTHER, and then sees the BELLMAN.*) Good even, sir! Mother, I played the organ myself to-day, — a whole piece, written by me, — and the master liked it! He said that some day —

MOTHER (*lovingly pushing the hair back from his forehead*). Aye, Jules, some day you 'll play two organs! Yes? But now we 've no time for dreams. The kind stranger here is inviting you to go to Mons with him.

JULES. Mons, mother? Where the great organ with a curse is? O — oh, and may I play it?

BELLMAN (*looking at him strangely*). Yes, lad, perhaps you 'll play it.

JULES. Oh, how great! Can't you come too, mother? It would be fine to have you see Mons and the cathedral there.

MOTHER. No, Jules, come and eat now. I 'll put up a bit of lunch for you both; and then you must be on your way. It 's a night's journey to Mons.

JULES (*pulling out a stool*). Can't you eat with us, mother?

MOTHER. I 'm busy, Jules.

JULES (*pulling up a stool to the table and motioning the BELLMAN to sit. The BELLMAN comes from his place on the settle, and sits down, facing Jules's stool. JULES runs to the door.*)

JULES. Where's granddaddy, mother? Has n't he brought in the cows yet? Dione was loose last night; I had a hard chase for her. (*He turns to the BELLMAN.*) You see, sir, my grandfather's pretty old, and sometimes I help him bring in the cows. You see, I'm really the man of the family now that — now that there's no one but granddaddy and me to help mother. (*He goes over to his mother and pats her arm; then he sits down at the table and begins to eat.*) But you're not eating, sir, and mother's dumplings are very good.

BELLMAN. No, lad, I'm not eating to-night. Tell me of your music.

JULES. My music? It's the best thing I love in the world next to mother and grandad! Master lets me sit on a stool near him sometimes when he plays — not church music, but other music, after the people have gone, and the church gets dark. Then he plays processions — soldiers, and horses, you know, and red plumes, and battles — wonderful ones! Then it gets little — the music does — and far-away — and — oh, sir, it's beautiful, my master's music is! Shall we hear great music in Mons?

BELLMAN. I hope so, Jules.

JULES. And may I try, sir?

BELLMAN. Yes.

JULES. Then I'll play my new piece — the one I wrote. It's about a wind that comes down from mountains and swings the birds to sleep. I called it "The Mother Wind," because it's the most beautiful wind in the world! Like this — (*he hums*).

BELLMAN. It sounds truly fine, lad. Perhaps it will wake the organ's voice — I hope — hope. Come, we must be going, or we'll miss the Trial-day.

JULES (*jumping up*). Oh, splendid! It's wonderful to

be going, is n't it, mother? I wish you could come. But I'll tell you all about it, and perhaps — perhaps I'll bring you a bag of gold as big as this (*measuring with his hands*), and I'll build you a castle as big as the mountain (*pointing*). And we'll have a whole army of cowherds to bring in granddaddy's cows! (*He gets his cap, and takes the little bag of lunch his mother gives him. The BELLMAN rises, and they start toward the door. Just then the old GRANDFATHER is seen coming by the window in haste. He enters breathlessly, very much agitated.*)

GRANDFATHER. Jules! Jules! The young heifer's got by me again. She's roaming the lower pasture by the clay-pit. She'll fall in and break her legs. Come lad, hurry, and we'll catch her 'fore dark is on us.

JULES. But granddaddy, I — (*the GRANDFATHER is trembling and weary. He takes out his handkerchief and mops his forehead, and sinks down on the settle.*)

GRANDFATHER. I — I'm that weary with the chase, Jules, perhaps you could do it alone?

JULES (*looking slowly first at his mother, then at the Bellman, and then at the old cowherd, dropping his bag to the floor.*) I — I — (*He hesitates.*) Yes, you rest here; I can do it alone. (*He turns to the BELLMAN again.*) Thank you, sir, but, you see, there — there won't be time now. (*His lip trembles, and he dashes his cap across his eyes, and hurries out. The group remain silent for a moment.*)

BELLMAN (*to the woman*). Will it take him long?

MOTHER. Last time it took him an hour getting Dione from the lower pasture.

BELLMAN. Then, I'm sorry. (*Bows.*) Good even to you, housewife. I must be going on my road.

(*He goes out. Jules's MOTHER stands, looking off.*)

[CURTAIN]

ACT III

SCENE: *same as Act I. The red light of sunset floods the stage and throws shadows on the crowd of peasants in the market place. They are grouped about in excited and weary little gatherings, — some sitting on the steps of the Crier's platform, — all wearing the worn-out look of those who have waited for a long time. As the curtain rises, the MAYOR and MONSIEUR GRUYEAU are pacing back and forth in front of the cathedral — first up-stage, then down-stage.*

MAYOR. It is impossible, impossible — the cathedral doors will not open — that is all. Whoever heard of beating in the doors of a church? It is impossible!

GRUYEAU. But, your Honor, I insist it is no miracle — no, not even the power of the curse on the cathedral — that is keeping those doors shut. I repeat: the Bellman of Mons has the key — and where has he been all day? Surely, if he has locked the doors for some sly purpose of his own, it would be no sin for us to break in and hold the trial. See — the sun is already growing red in the west. Soon it will be too late!

MAYOR. Then, the organ must be destroyed!

GRUYEAU. But not without trial, your Honor. Surely not that.

MAYOR (*paying no attention to Gruyeau's suggestion, but following out his own line of thought*). Did n't my proclamation say so? And did n't you promise to pay for a new organ, if this day passes and the organ of Mons is silent?

GRUYEAU. True — ah — I see it now — I see it now. (*He shouts this aloud angrily. The crowd gathers about him, listening.*) It is a plot of the Bellman's; he is angry

with me; he threatened me; he wants me to have to build an organ with my money. I see now.

TOWN CRIER. Aye, Monsieur Gruyeau, but you are so generous — surely you *wanted* to build the organ?

GRUYEAU. Of course — of — but I thought, well, I have been studying music somewhat this year and I hoped — (*he continues talking in a low tone to MAYOR and CRIER.*)

(ANTOINE and JACQUES are on the opposite side of the stage from GRUYEAU — down stage left.)

JACQUES (*in low tones to ANTOINE, and laughing*). Ha! ha! Old Gruyeau's not so generous after all. So that's why we forced the promise out of him. He had planned to be the winner in the trial, himself.

ANTOINE (*looking at the sun*). It looks as if there would n't be any trial.

JACQUES. But there must be a trial, must n't there?

ANTOINE. I disremember just what the Town-Crier's proclamation said.

MAYOR (*loudly*). No! It's not to be thought of! Even to hold the trial, the doors of a church cannot be broken in. Some power is holding those doors closed, and we must not make it angry.

GRUYEAU. "Power!" The power of lock and key is all. Would a *power* steal your keys, your Honor, and the sexton's keys? They are gone, are n't they? And the doors of the cathedral were open last night, were n't they? No — someone stole those keys — and stole them between late service yesterday and sunrise this morning. A *power* would n't have any use for keys, would it? Only men use keys.

MAYOR. What you say is all true; but remember — it is also true that the Bellman has been missing since yesterday morning. How could he steal the keys?

TOWN CRIER. Perhaps he came back for them in the night.

GRUYEAU. Aye — most of his dealings are by night. He is a queer one — and has more to do with this matter than we know.

MAYOR. Idiots! Why should the old Bellman want the cathedral locked? He's the one man in town who seemed to want most to hear that organ's music.

TOWN CRIER (*waving his hands excitedly*). Wait, I have it: he is the one man who did n't want this organ torn down. You are wrong, Gruyeau; he does n't want you to have to pay for another. He wants this one to remain untouched.

GRUYEAU (*sulkily*). Perhaps — Then does this mean he has gone away with the keys forever, and the organ and cathedral are to stand locked and silent till they fall in dust?

MAYOR (*throwing up his hands*). Who knows — who knows?

GRUYEAU (*pleading*). Come, your Honor, just let the blacksmith force the door. I have always been a good citizen, have I not? Let me have a try at the organ. If I fail — then I build a new one for the town.

JACQUES (*aside to ANTOINE*). You may be sure he does n't intend to fail.

ANTOINE. He is n't going to have a chance.

TOWN CRIER (*rushing down-stage to where group is standing*). It will be too late in a moment. The sun is setting, your Honor.

MAYOR. Aye — the sun is setting on the last Trial-day of Mons. (*The people all turn in silence and watch the light fade out of the sky*) The sun has set.

(*A sigh goes up.*)

JACQUES. And the organ is still silent.

ANTOINE. The organ is still silent.

(Commotion in the back of the crowd. The BELLMAN comes forward, holding little JULES by the hand. They are both breathless.)

BELLMAN. But it will not be silent long. Here is he who will play it! *(He pushes JULES ahead of him.)*

CROWD. The Bellman! The old Bellman!

MAYOR. You are too late; the sun has set.

JULES. Oh — *(looking up in the BELLMAN'S face)* after all your trouble — coming back for me — *(to the MAYOR)* and we hurried so fast, monsieur.

BELLMAN. Nay, we 're not too late.

TOWN CRIER. But the sun —

CROWD *(excitedly)*. Yes — the sun has set. — It is too late. — The Mayor is right.

GRUYEAU. Scoundrel — have you the keys?

MAYOR. It does not matter. It is too late.

TOWN CRIER. Aye — the sun —

BELLMAN. Wait! Read the wording on the proclamation!

TOWN CRIER. Shall I reread the proclamation, your Honor?

MAYOR. Aye, read it, and show him.

TOWN CRIER *(mounting platform solemnly, drawing a scroll from his pocket. He pauses and surveys the crowd. ANTOINE and JACQUES murmur together. The CRIER frowns on them.)* Meticulous attention, please! I am about to read at his Eminent Honor the Mayor's bequest. *(He reads:)* "Be it hereby known to the good people of Mons, that if — after suitable trial has been made to bring forth music from the organ of Mons Cathedral, on the Trial-day herein stated, the organ still is silent at the setting of the sun — then shall that organ be —"

BELLMAN. Wait! Read the first line again!

TOWN CRIER. "Be it hereby known to the —"

M. GRUYEAU. Go on!

TOWN CRIER. "— to the good people of Mons, that if — after suitable trial has been made —"

BELLMAN. That was the wording: "Suitable trial." I remembered those words as he told them to us, and later I saw them written down in the proclamation. But suitable trial has not been made!

CROWD. True! — So it has n't. — He is right.

JACQUES (*to ANTOINE*). He saw to that.

BELLMAN. Then let us hold the trial now.

GRUYEAU. But the keys?

(*The BELLMAN hauls out a key-ring and fingers four heavy keys.*)

GRUYEAU. I knew he had the keys. Did n't I say so?

MARKET-WOMAN. He had the keys — his and the sexton's.

MADAME PEYÉ. He must have stolen them in the night!

MARKET-WOMAN. Stolen them in the night! He's a sly one.

MAYOR. But wait; to fill the conditions of my document *only one* contestant may try — for one would be "suitable trial."

CROWD. (*turning to one another.*) One would be suitable trial. — Only one may try. — Of course, the Mayor is right. — Who will it be?

GRUYEAU. Then, your Honor, I claim the right, as first landowner of the county, to try first.

CROWD. Aye! — Right! — Let our Monsieur Gruyeau try first.

BELLMAN. If he fail?

MAYOR. Then is Trial-day over and the organ denounced to fall. Gruyeau, it is yours to try.

BELLMAN. No! No, your Honor! He will fail — then the organ must be destroyed. See — You are right; then “suitable trial” will have been made — the words of the proclamation. That is why I locked the door — so it could n’t be made before I got here.

(CROWD *murmurs excitedly.*)

GRUYEAU. Foolishness, your Honor! If one person’s trying constitutes “suitable trial,” then I demand my right as first citizen of Mons — ah, next to your Honor —

MAYOR (*with a deprecating wave of his hand*). Don’t count me in this. I’m no musician.

GRUYEAU. — to be the one person to try.

MAYOR. Of course, Monsieur Gruyeau.

BELLMAN (*on his knees*). I am an old man, your Honor; this is my last request on earth — I hope. Let the little boy try! He is so little, his trying need not count. Then Monsieur Gruyeau can still try and his be called the first “suitable” trial, according to the words of the proclamation.

CROWD. Yes — Let the little one try. — Let him try, your Honor!

GRUYEAU. We-ll — (*He looks about. The CROWD murmurs assent.*) Of course, he is a mere nothing. I agree.

(*It has become dark now on stage, and the BELLMAN and TOWN-CRIER light their lanterns. The BELLMAN goes up the steps of the cathedral, followed by JULES. He unlocks the doors and pushes them open. The two go in — while the crowd waits, expectantly hushed. Unconsciously they are impressed by the solemnity of the old man, the sweet earnestness of the boy’s face in the lantern-light.*)

GRUYEAU (*laughing nervously*). He will fail.

CROWD. Hush ! —— Sh-h !

(They wait; there is a silence; then the soft, awed notes of the organ are heard rising through the night. The old BELLMAN comes to the door, tears of joy in his eyes. The people kneel as before a miracle. The BELLMAN, carrying his lighted lantern, walks down the steps, threading his way carefully among them. The organ continues to play. The BELLMAN passes out of sight down the road.)

MADAME PEYÉ *(in hushed tones)*. He casts no shadow as he walks.

ANNETTE *(as she is kneeling beside her mother)*. Where did he go so quickly ? I can't see him any more.

MADAME PEYÉ. Hush, child — listen to the music !
(The music swells to crescendo as the curtain falls.)

[CURTAIN]

A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL¹

ANTON TCHEKOFF

English Version by

HILMAR BAUKHAGE and BARRETT H. CLARK

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

STEPAN STEPANOVITCH TSCHUBUKOV, a country farmer
NATALIA STEPANOVNA, his daughter (aged twenty-five)
IVAN VASSILIYITCH LOMOV, Tschubukov's neighbor

SCENE: *The reception room in TSCHUBUKOV's Russian country home. TSCHUBUKOV discovered as the curtain rises. Enter LOMOV, wearing a dress suit.*

TSCHUBUKOV (*going toward him and greeting him*). Who is this I see? My dear fellow! Ivan Vassiliyitch! I'm so glad to see you! (*Shakes hands.*) But this is a surprise! How are you?

LOMOV. Thank you! And how are you?

TSCHUB. Oh, so-so, my friend. Please sit down. It is n't right to forget one's neighbor. But tell me, why all this ceremony? Dress clothes, white gloves, and all? Are you on your way to some engagement, my good fellow?

LOMOV. No, I have no engagement except with you, Stepan Stepanovitch.

TSCHUB. But why in evening clothes, my friend? This is n't New Year's!

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LOMOV. You see, it's simply this, that — (*composing himself*) I have come to you, Stepan Stepanovitch, to trouble you with a request. It is not the first time I have had the honor of turning to you for assistance, and you have always, that is — I beg your pardon, I am a bit excited! I'll take a drink of water first, dear Stepan Stepanovitch. (*He drinks.*)

TSCHUB. (*aside*). He's come to borrow money! I won't give him any! (*To LOMOV*) What is it, then, dear Lomov?

LOMOV. You see — dear — Stepanovitch, pardon me, Stepan — Stepan — dearvitch — I mean — I am terribly nervous, as you will be so good as to see —! What I mean to say — you are the only one who can help me, though I don't deserve it, and — and I have no right whatever to make this request of you.

TSCHUB. Oh, don't beat about the bush, my dear fellow. Tell me!

LOMOV. Immediately — in a moment. Here it is, then: I have come to ask for the hand of your daughter, Natalia Stepanovna.

TSCHUB. (*joyfully*). Angel! Ivan Vassiliyitch! Say that once again! I did n't quite hear it!

LOMOV. I have the honor to beg —

TSCHUB. (*interrupting*). My dear, dear man! I am so happy that everything is so — everything! (*Embraces and kisses him.*) I have wanted this to happen for so long. It has been my dearest wish! (*He represses a tear.*) And I have always loved you, my dear fellow, as my own son! May God give you his blessings and his grace and — I always wanted it to happen. But why am I standing here like a blockhead? I am completely dumfounded with pleasure, completely dumfounded. My whole being —! I'll call Natalia —

LOMOV. Dear Stepan Stepanovitch, what do you think? May I hope for Natalia Stepanovna's acceptance?

TSCHUB. Really! A fine boy like you — and you think she won't accept on the minute? Lovesick as a cat and all that —! (*He goes out, right.*)

LOMOV. I'm cold. My whole body is trembling as though I was going to take my examination! But the chief thing is to settle matters! If a person meditates too much, or hesitates, or talks about it, waits for an ideal or for true love, he never gets it. Brrr! It's cold! Natalia is an excellent housekeeper, not at all bad-looking, well educated — what more could I ask? I'm so excited my ears are roaring! (*He drinks water.*) And not to marry, that won't do! In the first place, I'm thirty-five — a critical age, you might say. In the second place, I must live a well-regulated life. I have a weak heart, continual palpitation, and I am very sensitive and always getting excited. My lips begin to tremble and the pulse in my right temple throbs terribly. But the worst of all is sleep! I hardly lie down and begin to doze before something in my left side begins to pull and tug, and something begins to hammer in my left shoulder — and in my head, too! I jump up like a madman, walk about a little, lie down again, but the moment I fall asleep I have a terrible cramp in the side. And so it is all night long! (*Enter NATALIA.*)

NATALIA. Ah! It's you. Papa said to go in: there was a dealer in there who'd come to buy something. Good afternoon, Ivan Vassiliyitch.

LOMOV. Good day, my dear Natalia Stepanovna.

NATALIA. You must pardon me for wearing my apron and this old dress: we are working to-day. Why have n't you come to see us oftener? You've not been here for so long! Sit down. (*They sit down.*) Won't you have something to eat?

LOMOV. Thank you, I have just had lunch.

NATALIA. Smoke, do; there are the matches. To-day it is beautiful and only yesterday it rained so hard that the workmen could n't do a stroke of work. How many bricks have you cut? Think of it! I was so anxious that I had the whole field mowed, and now I'm sorry I did it, because I'm afraid the hay will rot. It would have been better if I had waited. But what on earth is this? You are in evening clothes! The latest cut! Are you on your way to a ball? And you seem to be looking better, too — really. Why are you dressed up so gorgeously?

LOMOV (*excited*). You see, my dear Natalia Stepanovna — it's simply this: I have decided to ask you to listen to me — of course it will be a surprise, and indeed you'll be angry, but I — (*aside*) How fearfully cold it is!

NATALIA. What is it? (*A pause*) Well?

LOMOV. I'll try to be brief. My dear Natalia Stepanovna, as you know, for many years, since my childhood, I have had the honor to know your family. My poor aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited the estate, always had the greatest respect for your father and your poor mother. The Lomovs and the Tschubukovs have been for decades on the friendliest, indeed the closest, terms with each other, and furthermore my property, as you know, adjoins your own. If you will be so good as to remember, my meadows touch your birch woods.

NATALIA. Pardon the interruption. You said "my meadows" — but are they yours?

LOMOV. Yes, they belong to me.

NATALIA. What nonsense! The meadows belong to us — not to you!

LOMOV. No, to me! Now, my dear Natalia Stepanovna!

NATALIA. Well, that is certainly news to me. How do they belong to you?

LOMOV. How? I am speaking of the meadows lying between your birch woods and my brick-earth.

NATALIA. Yes, exactly. They belong to us.

LOMOV. No, you are mistaken, my dear Natalia Stepanovna, they belong to me.

NATALIA. Try to remember exactly, Ivan Vassiliyitch. Is it so long ago that you inherited them?

LOMOV. Long ago! As far back as I can remember they have always belonged to us.

NATALIA. But that is n't true! You'll pardon my saying so.

LOMOV. It is all a matter of record, my dear Natalia Stepanovna. It is true that at one time the title to the meadows was disputed, but now everyone knows they belong to me. There is no room for discussion. Be so good as to listen: my aunt's grandmother put these meadows, free from all costs, into the hands of your father's grandfather's peasants for a certain time while they were making bricks for my grandmother. These people used the meadows free of cost for about forty years, living there as they would on their own property. Later, however, when —

NATALIA. There's not a word of truth in that! My grandfather, and my great-grandfather, too, knew that their estate reached back to the swamp, so that the meadows belong to us. What further discussion can there be? I can't understand it — It is really most annoying.

LOMOV. I'll show you the papers, Natalia Stepanovna.

NATALIA. No, either you are joking, or trying to lead me into a discussion. That's not at all nice! We have owned this property for nearly three hundred years, and now all at once we hear that it does n't belong to us.

Ivan Vassiliyitch, you will pardon me, but I really can't believe my ears. So far as I am concerned, the meadows are worth very little. In all they don't contain more than five acres and they are worth only a few hundred roubles — say three hundred; but the injustice of the thing is what affects me. Say what you will, I can't bear injustice.

LOMOV. Only listen until I have finished, please! The peasants of your respected father's grandfather, as I have already had the honor to tell you, baked bricks for my grandmother. My aunt's grandmother wished to do them a favor —

NATALIA. Grandfather! — Grandmother! — Aunt! — I know nothing about them. All I know is that the meadows belong to us, and that ends the matter.

LOMOV. No, they belong to me!

NATALIA. And if you keep on explaining it for two days, and put on five suits of evening clothes, the meadows are still ours, — ours, — ours! I don't want to take your property, but I refuse to give up what belongs to us!

LOMOV. Natalia Stepanovna, I don't need the meadows, I am only concerned with the principle. If you are agreeable, I beg of you, accept them as a gift from me!

NATALIA. But I can give them to you, because they belong to me! That is very peculiar, Ivan Vassiliyitch! Until now we have considered you as a good neighbor and a good friend; only last year we lent you our threshing machine so that we could n't thresh until November, and now you treat us like thieves! You offer to give me my own land. Excuse me, but neighbors don't treat each other that way. In my opinion, it's a very low trick — to speak frankly —

LOMOV. According to you I'm a usurper, then, am I? My dear lady, I have never appropriated other people's property, and I shall permit no one to accuse me of such

a thing! (*He goes quickly to the bottle and drinks water.*)
The meadows are mine!

NATALIA. That's not the truth! They are mine!

LOMOV. Mine!

NATALIA. Eh? I'll prove it to you! This afternoon I'll send my reapers into the meadows.

LOMOV. W—h—a—t?

NATALIA. My reapers will be there to-day!

LOMOV. And I'll chase them off!

NATALIA. If you dare!

LOMOV. The meadows are mine, you understand?
Mine!

NATALIA. Really, you need n't scream so! If you want to scream and snort and rage, you may do it at home, but here please keep yourself within the limits of common decency.

LOMOV. My dear lady, if it were n't that I am suffering from palpitation of the heart and hammering of the arteries in my temples, I would deal with you very differently! (*In a loud voice*) The meadows belong to me!

NATALIA. Us!

LOMOV. Me! (*Enter TSCHUBUKOV, right.*)

TSCHUB. What's going on here? What is he yelling about?

NATALIA. Papa, please tell this gentleman to whom the meadows belong, to us or to him?

TSCHUB. (*to LOMOV*). My dear fellow, the meadows are ours.

LOMOV. But, merciful heavens, Stepan Stepanovitch, how do you make that out? You at least might be reasonable. My aunt's grandmother gave the use of the meadows free of cost to your grandfather's peasants; the peasants lived on the land for forty years and used it as their own, but later, when —

TSCHUB. Permit me, my dear friend. You forget that your grandmother's peasants never paid, because there had been a lawsuit over the meadows, and everyone knows that the meadows belong to us. You haven't looked at the map.

LOMOV. I'll prove to you that they belong to me!

TSCHUB. Don't try to prove it, my dear fellow.

LOMOV. I will!

TSCHUB. My good fellow, what are you shrieking about? You can't prove anything by yelling, you know. I don't ask for anything that belongs to you, nor do I intend to give up anything of my own. Why should I? If it has gone so far, my dear man, that you really intend to claim the meadows, I'd rather give them to the peasants than to you, and I certainly shall!

LOMOV. I can't believe it! By what right can you give away property that does n't belong to you?

TSCHUB. Really, you must allow me to decide what I am to do with my own land! I'm not accustomed, young man, to have people address me in that tone of voice. I, young man, am twice your age, and I beg you to address me respectfully.

LOMOV. No! No! You think I'm a fool! You're making fun of me! You call my property yours and then expect me to stand quietly by and talk to you like a human being. That is n't the way a good neighbor behaves, Stepan Stepanovitch! You are no neighbor; you're no better than a land-grabber. That's what you are!

TSCHUB. Wh—at? What did he say?

NATALIA. Papa, send the reapers into the meadows this minute!

TSCHUB. (to LOMOV). What was that you said, sir?

NATALIA. The meadows belong to us and I won't

give them up! I won't give them up! I won't give them up!

LOMOV. We'll see about that! I'll prove in court that they belong to me.

TSCHUB. In court! You may sue in court, sir, if you like! Oh, I know you; you are only waiting to find an excuse to go to law! You're an intriguer; that's what you are! Your whole family were always looking for quarrels. The whole lot!

LOMOV. Kindly refrain from insulting my family. The entire race of Lomov has always been honorable! And never has one been brought to trial for embezzlement, as your dear uncle was!

TSCHUB. And the whole Lomov family were insane!

NATALIA. Every one of them!

TSCHUB. Your grandmother was a dipsomaniac, and the younger aunt, Nastasia Michailovna, ran off with an architect.

LOMOV. And your mother limped. (*He puts his hand over his heart.*) Oh, my side pains! My temples are bursting! Lord in Heaven! Water!

TSCHUB. And your dear father was a gambler — and a glutton!

NATALIA. And your aunt was a gossip like few others!

LOMOV. And you are an intriguer. Oh, my heart! And it's an open secret that you cheated at the elections — my eyes are blurred! Where is my hat?

NATALIA. Oh, how low! Liar! Disgusting thing!

LOMOV. Where's the hat —? My heart! Where shall I go? Where is the door —? Oh — it seems — as though I were dying! I can't — my legs won't hold me —

(*Goes to the door.*)

TSCHUB. (*following him*). May you never darken my door again!

NATALIA. Bring your suit to court! We'll see!

(LOMOV staggers out, centre.)

TSCHUB. (*angrily*). The devil!

NATALIA. Such a good-for-nothing! And then they talk about being good neighbors!

TSCHUB. Loafer! Scarecrow! Monster!

NATALIA. A swindler like that takes over a piece of property that does n't belong to him and then dares to argue about it!

TSCHUB. And to think that this fool dares to make a proposal of marriage!

NATALIA. What? A proposal of marriage?

TSCHUB. Why, yes! He came here to make you a proposal of marriage.

NATALIA. Why did n't you tell me that before?

TSCHUB. That's why he had on his evening clothes! The poor fool!

NATALIA. Proposal for me? Oh! (*Falls into an arm-chair and groans.*) Bring him back! Bring him back!

TSCHUB. Bring whom back?

NATALIA. Faster, faster, I'm sinking! Bring him back! (*She becomes hysterical.*)

TSCHUB. What is it? What's wrong with you? (*His hands to his head*) I'm cursed with bad luck! I'll shoot myself! I'll hang myself!

NATALIA. I'm dying! Bring him back!

TSCHUB. Bah! In a minute! Don't bawl!

(*He rushes out, centre.*)

NATALIA (*groaning*). What have they done to me? Bring him back! Bring him back!

TSCHUB. (*comes running in*). He's coming at once! The devil take him! Ugh! Talk to him yourself; I can't.

NATALIA (*groaning*). Bring him back!

TSCHUB. He's coming, I tell you! "Oh, Lord! What a task it is to be the father of a grown daughter!" I'll cut my throat! I really will cut my throat! We've argued with the fellow, insulted him, and now we've thrown him out! — and you did it all, you!

NATALIA. No, you! You have n't any manners; you are brutal! If it were n't for you, he would n't have gone!

TSCHUB. Oh, yes, I'm to blame! If I shoot or hang myself, remember *you* 'll be to blame. You forced me to it! You! (LOMOV *appears in the doorway.*) There, talk to him yourself! (He goes out.)

LOMOV. Terrible palpitation! My leg is lamed! My side hurts me —

NATALIA. Pardon us; we were angry, Ivan Vassiliyitch. I remember now — the meadows really belong to you.

LOMOV. My heart is beating terribly! My meadows — my eyelids tremble — (They sit down.) We were wrong. It was only the principle of the thing — the property is n't worth much to me, but the principle is worth a great deal.

NATALIA. Exactly, the principle! Let us talk about something else.

LOMOV. Because I have proofs that my aunt's grandmother had, with the peasants of your grandfather —

NATALIA. Enough, enough. (Aside) I don't know how to begin. (To LOMOV) Are you going hunting soon?

LOMOV. Yes, heath-cock shooting, respected Natalia Stepanovna. I expect to begin after the harvest. Oh, did you hear? My dog, Ugadi, you know him — limps!

NATALIA. What a shame! How did that happen?

LOMOV. I don't know. Perhaps it's a dislocation, or maybe he was bitten by some other dog. (He sighs.) The best dog I ever had — to say nothing of his price!

I paid Mironov a hundred and twenty-five roubles for him.

NATALIA. That was too much to pay, Ivan Vassilyitch.

LOMOV. In my opinion it was very cheap. A wonderful dog!

NATALIA. Papa paid eighty-five roubles for his Otkatai, and Otkatai is much better than your Ugadi.

LOMOV. Really? Otkatai is better than Ugadi? What an idea! (*He laughs.*) Otkatai better than Ugadi!

NATALIA. Of course he is better. It is true Otkatai is still young; he is n't full-grown yet, but in the pack or on the leash with two or three, there is no better than he, even —

LOMOV. I really beg your pardon, Natalia Stepanovna, but you quite overlooked the fact that he has a short lower jaw, and a dog with a short lower jaw can't snap.

NATALIA. Short lower jaw? That's the first time I ever heard that!

LOMOV. I assure you, his lower jaw is shorter than the upper.

NATALIA. Have you measured it?

LOMOV. I have measured it. He is good at running, though.

NATALIA. In the first place, our Otkatai is pure-bred, a full-blooded son of Sapravagas and Stameskis, and as for your mongrel, nobody could ever figure out his pedigree; Ugadi is old and ugly, and as skinny as an old hag.

LOMOV. Old, certainly! I would n't take five of your Otkatais for him! Ugadi is a dog and Otkatai is — it is laughable to argue about it! Dogs like your Otkatai can be found by the dozens at any dog dealer's, a whole pound-ful!

NATALIA. Ivan Vassiliyitch, you are very contrary to-day. First our meadows belong to you and then Ugadi is better than Otkatai. I don't like it when a person does n't say what he really thinks. You know perfectly well that Otkatai is a hundred times better than your silly Ugadi. What makes you keep on saying he is n't?

LOMOV. I can see, Natalia Stepanovna, that you consider me either a blind man or a fool. But at least you may as well admit that Otkatai has a short lower jaw!

NATALIA. It is n't so!

LOMOV. Yes, a short lower jaw!

NATALIA (*loudly*). It's not so!

LOMOV. What makes you scream, my dear lady?

NATALIA. What makes you talk such nonsense? It's disgusting! It is high time that Ugadi was shot; and yet you compare him with Otkatai!

LOMOV. Pardon me, but I can't carry on this argument any longer. I have palpitation of the heart!

NATALIA. I have always noticed that the hunters who do the most talking know the least about hunting.

LOMOV. My dear lady, I beg of you to be still. My heart is bursting! (*He shouts.*) Be still!

NATALIA. I won't be still until you admit that Otkatai is better! (*Enter TSCHUBUKOV.*)

TSCHUB. Well, has it begun again?

NATALIA. Papa, say frankly, on your honor, which dog is better: Otkatai or Ugadi?

LOMOV. Stepan Stepanovitch, I beg of you, just answer this: has your dog a short lower jaw or not? Yes or no?

TSCHUB. And what if he has? Is it of such importance? There is no better dog in the whole country.

LOMOV. My Ugadi is better. Tell the truth, now!

TSCHUB. Don't get so excited, my dear fellow! Permit me. Your Ugadi certainly has his good points. He is from a good breed, has a good stride, strong haunches, and so forth. But the dog, if you really want to know it, has two faults; he is old and he has a short lower jaw.

LOMOV. Pardon me, I have palpitation of the heart! — Let us keep to facts — just remember in Maruskins's meadows, my Ugadi kept ear to ear with the Count Rasvachai and your dog.

TSCHUB. He was behind, because the Count struck him with his whip.

LOMOV. Quite right. All the other dogs were on the fox's scent, but Otkatai found it necessary to bite a sheep.

TSCHUB. That is n't so! — I am sensitive about that and beg you to stop this argument. He struck him because everybody looks on a strange dog of good blood with envy. Even you, sir, are n't free from the sin. No sooner do you find a dog better than Ugadi than you begin to — this, that — his, mine — and so forth! I remember distinctly.

LOMOV. I remember something, too!

TSCHUB. (*mimicking him*). I remember something, too! What do you remember?

LOMOV. Palpitation! My leg is lame — I can't —

NATALIA. Palpitation! What kind of hunter are you? You ought to stay in the kitchen by the stove and wrestle with the potato peelings, and not go fox-hunting! Palpitation!

TSCHUB. And what kind of hunter are you? A man with your diseases ought to stay at home and not jolt around in the saddle. If you were a hunter —! But you only ride round in order to find out about other people's dogs, and make trouble for everyone. I am

sensitive! Let's drop the subject. Besides, you're no hunter.

LOMOV. And are you a hunter? You only ride around to flatter the Count! — My heart! You intriguer! Swindler!

TSCHUB. And what of it? (*Shouting*) Be still!

LOMOV. Intriguer!

TSCHUB. Baby! Puppy! Walking drug-store!

LOMOV. Old rat! Deceiver! Oh, I know you!

TSCHUB. Be still! Or I'll shoot you — with my worst gun, like a partridge! Fool! Loafer!

LOMOV. Everyone knows that — oh, my heart! — that your poor late wife beat you. My leg — my temples — Heavens — I'm dying — I —

TSCHUB. And your housekeeper wears the trousers in your house!

LOMOV. Here — here — there — there — my heart has burst! My shoulder is torn apart. Where is my shoulder? I'm dying! (*He falls into a chair.*) The doctor! (*Faints.*)

TSCHUB. Baby! Half-baked clam! Fool!

NATALIA. Nice sort of hunter you are! You can't even sit on a horse. (*To TSCHUB*) Papa, what's the matter with him? (*She screams.*) Ivan Vassiliyitch! He is dead!

LOMOV. I'm ill! I can't breathe! Air!

NATALIA. He is dead! (*She shakes LOMOV in the chair.*) Ivan Vassiliyitch! What have we done! He is dead! (*She sinks into a chair.*) The doctor — doctor!

(*She goes into hysterics.*)

TSCHUB. Ahh! What is it? What's the matter with you?

NATALIA (*groaning*). He's dead! — Dead!

TSCHUB. Who is dead? Who? (*Looking at LOMOV*) Yes, he is dead! Good God! Water! The doctor!

(*Holding the glass to LOMOV's lips*) Drink! No, he won't drink! He's dead! What a terrible situation! Why did n't I shoot myself? Why have I never cut my throat? What am I waiting for now? Only give me a knife! Give me a pistol! (LOMOV *moves*.) He's coming to! Drink some water — there!

LOMOV. Sparks! Mists! Where am I?

TSCHUB. Get married! Quick, and then go to the devil! She's willing! (*He joins the hands of LOMOV and NATALIA*.) She's agreed! Only leave me in peace!

LOMOV. Wh—what? (*Getting up*) Whom?

TSCHUB. She's willing! Well? Kiss each other and — the devil take you both!

NATALIA (*groans*). He lives! Yes, yes, I'm willing!

TSCHUB. Kiss each other!

LOMOV. Eh? Whom? (NATALIA and LOMOV *kiss*.) Very nice —! Pardon me, but what is this for? Oh, yes, I understand! My heart — sparks — I am happy, Natalia Stepanovna. (*He kisses her hand*.) My leg is lame!

NATALIA. I'm happy, too!

TSCHUB. Ahh! A load off my shoulders! Ahh!

NATALIA. And now at least you'll admit that Ugadi is worse than Otkatai!

LOMOV. Better!

NATALIA. Worse!

TSCHUB. Now the domestic joys have begun — Champagne!

LOMOV. Better!

NATALIA. Worse, worse, worse!

TSCHUB. (*trying to drown them out*). Champagne, champagne!

[CURTAIN]

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER ¹

ELMA EHRLICH LEVINGER

CHARACTERS

JEPHTHAH, a man of Gilead

SHEILAH, his only child

ELAD, his father

DINAH, Sheilah's old nurse

AMASA, an elder in Israel

NATHAN, his son

RACHEL, Amasa's daughter

ZEBUL, the singer

JOSIAH, comrade of Jephthah

MICHAL } young girls of Mizpeh

TIRZAH }

SOLDIERS, PEOPLE of Mizpeh

TIME: *A spring morning in the days of the Judges.*

PLACE: *Before the house of Jephthah, on the road to Mizpeh.*

NOTE. According to later legends clustered about the tale of Jephthah's daughter, she was named Sheilah, "the one who is demanded." These commentators also described Jephthah's mother as the woman of another tribe. This would account for the ill treatment Jephthah received at the hands of his brethren, as at that time a woman who married out of her own

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tribe was held in great contempt. Even to this day many Orientals esteem the betrothal as binding as the marriage. And, should the reader feel that Nathan seems out of place in the rude atmosphere of the Judges, let him remember the gentle courtesy of Boaz, who is of the same period.

The scenery may be as conventional as desired, the house of Jephthah being a small hut, almost primitive in design, the place before it wild and rugged, the gates and hills beyond Mizpeh showing faintly in the distance. On the other hand, the background may consist of curtains of a dark or neutral color with the house of Jephthah and its rude entrance indicated on the left. The director of the music should remember that the music of the Orient lacks what we are pleased to call "harmony," and should strive for the rhythmic chant characteristic of primitive music. If desired, the "songs" may be chanted or even spoken to the music of a harp or violin played off stage. The dances may be made elaborate or simple, according to the talent available, but in every case should suggest the color and the vigor of the East. The cast may be shortened to include only a handful of women and soldiers, or extended to include a large number of singers and dancers and younger children.

The house of Jephthah is a humble, low-roofed affair with several flat stones forming the stairs; rude stone pillars either side the door. A few rocks, forming a natural rostrum. We hear a girl's voice singing, within the house, a weirdly impassioned chant of battle and triumphant pride, strangely blended with religious fervor. Still singing, SHEILAH comes out of the house, the lap of her scarlet robe heaped high with flowers which she twines among the garlands already about the posts. She is a slender, dark girl of about sixteen, now shyly dreaming, now running over with youth and happiness. Tissot has drawn her well in his tanned, vibrant young Jewess with the thoughtful eyes. As she works, she sings half absently the old song of her people, the song of Miriam by the sea, improvising, now and then, her voice thrilling with joyful pride.

SHEILAH.

The Lord is my strength and my song
And He is become my salvation;
Him will I praise from morning until evening;
The Lord has heard the sound of my lamentation;
He has given ear unto my cry:
Therefore will I exalt Him without ceasing.
Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?

The Lord is my strength and my song
And He is become my salvation;
He has set my foot upon the neck of those who hated
me,
He has decked me in their robes of blue and purple,
Therefore will I exalt him without ceasing,
Therefore will my praises ascend by day and by
night.

(DINAH comes from the house, a wrinkled woman with
graying hair, but vigorous and upright. She always
addresses the girl with a sort of chiding tenderness.)

DINAH. Shame, idle child, shame! Why did you
run away and leave me with the hearth unswept and
the dough still within the kneading-trough? (*Grumbling*)
A pretty damsel to rule the home — and you are woman
grown!

(SHEILAH, laughing saucily over her shoulder, gives a
final pat to her garlands, and, taking some bread
from the flat straw basket upon the steps, begins to
scatter crumbs to the birds.)

DINAH (*with increasing wrath*). You pay less heed to
me than to the chirping of those noisy sparrows. Come
in at once and help me with my tasks, lest all Mizpeh
say I let you run as wild as a goat upon the hills. Come
in, I say!

SHEILAH (*shaking her off laughingly*). Nurse, nurse,
leave me in peace and give your scolding tongue a holi-

day, for is it not high festival in Mizpeh? (*She runs up the steps to rearrange a loose garland.*) Surely, I should twine these doorposts with garlands when my own father is returning from battle to-day and all Mizpeh will strew flowers before his victorious feet.

DINAH (*still grumbling*). Aye, at last the folk of Mizpeh know his worth. Those who spit on our poor house when passing will fling wide the city's gate at his coming and call themselves his friends.

SHEILAH. The lords of Mizpeh have grown his friends — nay, his bondmen. My father went forth an outcast; he will return a king. (*Swaying as in a triumphant dance, a garland above her head*) He has overcome Ammon! The garments of the princes of Ammon are become a carpet to his feet that he may come as a king unto Mizpeh.

DINAH (*shaking her head gloomily*). Yea, rejoice in the thoughtlessness of your youth. Dance and sing in triumph and never a thought of your mother who will not be with the others at the city's gate to sound timbrels to his glory.

SHEILAH (*with a sudden change of mood, gravely tender as she throws herself beside DINAH, now seated on the doorsill*). Poor mother! If she had not died when I was born — if she might only stand among the women and hear him praised in the gates. Perhaps, it might redeem a little the years of misery she spent for his sake.

DINAH (*soothing her*). Nay, my little one, forget the jeers and the injuries. Your mother was woman grown when she wedded, and she knew what grief awaited her as the wife of Jephthah, an outlaw in Israel.

SHEILAH (*indignantly*). My father's shame was not of his own making!

DINAH. Surely, he suffered for no sin of his own. But the sons of Elad, his father, could never forget that

Jephthah was the son of a woman of Moab and they hated him for it. His youth was made bitter as the child of a strange woman; when he grew to manhood and found a maiden brave enough to be his wife, her brethren drove them out of Mizpeh with stones and curses.

SHEILAH (*with scorn*). And for this bridal blessing, for the long years of hatred for him and his, my father avenges himself — by saving his persecutors from Ammon. Less generous would I have shown myself to those who scorned me.

DINAH (*chuckling*). Generous! Nay, daughter of Jephthah, your father showed himself a shrewd maker of bargains. Ere he buckled on his armor, did he not exact heavy payment from Gilead? Did he not demand full recognition as son of the tribe — nay, more, that if he brought low the children of Ammon, he should rule as a king in Mizpeh?

SHEILAH (*rising and gravely bowing before an imaginary monarch*). Greeting to you, O lord and king! Enter the gates of our city and be ruler over Mizpeh. Greeting to you, O warriors of Israel, who have saved us out of the hand of Ammon!

DINAH (*dryly, as she rearranges several garlands*). And greeting to Nathan, son of Amasa, right hand of Jephthah in battle, flower of the youths of Mizpeh!

SHEILAH (*half angrily*). Cease, Dinah —

DINAH (*with shrewd humor*). Why should I hold my peace when every tongue in Mizpeh wags with your secret? Even before the sons of Gilead cried on Jephthah for aid, every old wife in Mizpeh knew that Nathan, son of Amasa, had pleaded with your father for your hand.

SHEILAH (*protesting*). We are not betrothed.

DINAH (*teasingly*). It were well you wore the bridal

veil to-day to hide your blushes — even at his name. Your father himself told me that should young Nathan prove himself worthy in battle —

SHEILAH. He never told me of his love.

DINAH (*with a grimace*). These eyes are growing dim. But they could read his face when he bade you farewell and begged you for a trinket to wear in battle. (*Pulling aside one of the girl's long sleeves*) Where is the golden bracelet your mother wore upon her wedding day?

SHEILAH (*looking away*). I —

DINAH (*smiling*). He will bring it back to-day and you will wear it again — and the ring of betrothal also.

SHEILAH. I would not have him see me so meanly clad, when all the maids of Mizpeh wear their festal robes. (*Her arms about DINAH, she speaks pleadingly.*) Dear Dinah, help me plait my hair and let me don fair robes that I may do grace to those who return triumphant from the wars.

DINAH (*who has been resting on the doorsill again, rises, grumbling*). Must I leave my work unfinished to deck you? You are fair enough in these.

SHEILAH. I would be like a queen before Mizpeh. (*Petting DINAH*) You will surely unlock the chest in which years ago you laid away my mother's bridal robe and the jewels she wore upon her bridal day. (*As DINAH hesitates and shakes her head*) My father said that they should all be mine when I was a grown woman. Surely, he would be pleased to see me wear them upon this day of days.

DINAH (*grumbling, but eager*). Yes, you must have them. They will suit you well, though you are less stately than your mother — and not half so fair. (*She looks away wistfully, dreaming.*) But you shall be decked like a princess on her bridal day, for the time has come.

SHEILAH (*half afraid*). I am but a simple maid. Perhaps I should not wear my mother's bridal garments.

DINAH (*soothing away her fears*). You are a child no longer — little one. (*Drawing her up the stairs*) Come in with me — not stately like your mother — but the robes will suit you well. (*As they stand in the doorway, RACHEL, MICHAL, and TIRZAH, three young girls, laughing and radiant, their arms filled with flowers, run in.*)

RACHEL. Sheilah, Sheilah, why have you not joined us at the city's gate? We are waiting for your father —

TIRZAH. We must make haste —

MICHAL (*holding out her hand*). Hurry — hurry —

SHEILAH (*proudly, but without anger*). Once, Rachel, you were not so eager to be my friend and playmate. You even censured Nathan, your brother, for crying out to me, as I passed, to join in your games.

RACHEL. That was long years ago. To-day —

TIRZAH. To-day you are the proudest woman heart in all Mizpeh. Come, forgive us our past mockery and join our festal procession to greet your father.

MICHAL (*taking SHEILAH'S hand timidly*). Surely, you forgive us.

SHEILAH (*with a happy laugh*). To-day I must forgive you — and all Mizpeh — for I am so happy. (*She bends down and kisses little MICHAL'S upturned face.*) I am glad you will be my friends — I have been hungry for love and friendship all my days.

DINAH (*cynically*). Aye, we all pay homage even to the dog — if he protect our sheepfold. (*As the girls, laughing and talking among themselves, are about to drag off SHEILAH*) Shameless one — have I not taught you better than to run before the gathered folk with tangled hair and in unseemly garments?

SHEILAH (*dancing back to her nurse*). Girls, I will join

you at the city's gate. But first — ah, wait until you see me in my queenly robes. (*With a mock salaam*) In paying me homage you will forget even my father's glory.

TIRZAH. You will be late —

SHEILAH. Nay, I will be with you to lead the festal dance before my father. (*The girls run out, laughing and talking. SHEILAH is about to follow DINAH when she stops a moment, her eyes on the distant hills, her face glowing with joy.*)

SHEILAH (*her voice a little hushed at the beauty of it all*). Ah, Dinah, it is good to be alive on a spring morning when the birds are building their nests and singing of golden summer days. (*Her voice breaking a little*) I am so happy I want to run and dance and laugh — and cry. For soon my father will return to me, no longer an out-cast, but as a king over all Gilead.

DINAH (*with gentle satire*). And with him Nathan, king of men.

SHEILAH (*simply*). And Nathan, the youth who played with me, although the others laughed, and helped me search for the first shy flowers many springs ago.

DINAH (*kissing her*). Come, let me deck you in your mother's bridal robes, for the time has come. (*They go into the house together.*)

(*A moment's pause. A group of soldiers, among them NATHAN and JOSIAH, enter and pass across the stage toward Mizpeh. Last of all come JEPHTHAH and his father, ELAD. JEPHTHAH is a mighty man, broad of shoulder, bull-throated, clad in armor. His eyes are keen as a sword; about his mouth the shameful years have left bitter lines not even his present pride can erase. ELAD is a bent old man with a calm, cold face. He walks with a staff and sinks upon the rocks to rest.*)

JEPHTHAH (*with a mocking gesture*). Welcome to Jephthah's palace, O father. It has long been the target of the stones and curses of my neighbors. (*His face softens as he notices the garlands about the doorposts; he touches one caressingly.*) My little Sheilah's handiwork. The one thing in all the world to love me when I wore the brand of shame.

ELAD (*wincing at the unspoken reproach*). How could I acknowledge you before the people?

JEPHTHAH. Surely, there was little pride in being father of the foreign woman's son. But to-day (*with a swift gesture*) — ah, to-day, I cast aside my ancient shame and my ancient hatreds. My tribe that once cast me out will receive me with timbrels, with singing and with garlands of victory. (*Lifting one of the garlands from the door*) Nay, more: they will keep their bargain and I shall be more than a son of Gilead; I shall rule the people and dwell as a king in Mizpeh. Have I not done well, O my father?

ELAD. Yea, too well.

JEPHTHAH (*about to enter the house, comes back to where ELAD sits*). I do not understand.

ELAD. I fear the good fortune which raises a man from the dunghill to the throne. The Lord, when He gives too generously with one hand, withdraws with the other. He has given you all too bountifully of glory — He will demand payment.

JEPHTHAH. Let Him demand payment and I will pay.

ELAD (*shaking his gray head*). Beware of idle boasting, lest you stumble in your pride. The Lord God is not as a merchant in the marketplace that you can bargain with Him.

JEPHTHAH. Nay, let Him demand payment and I will mete out to Him with just weights and a just measure.

Did I not demand payment of the men of Gilead? And have they not paid? Shall I be less honest even with the Lord?

ELAD (*rising*). He may demand heavy payment. O my son, I am fearful for you — perhaps, too fearful; but since my Simeon fell in battle yestermoon, I have no son but you, and I tremble lest misfortune cross the doorsill of your house. All my hopes lie in you and Sheilah, the last of our blood in Israel, seeing that you have no other child and all my other sons are dead.

JEPHTHAH (*throwing off his slight foreboding*). See — I have only to stretch forth my hand and I grasp — (*catching one of the loose garlands*) victory, glory, praise before the sons of Gilead. True, as you say, I have risen from the dunghill. (*Exultantly*) But who can drag me from my throne?

ELAD (*quietly*). God!

JEPHTHAH (*proudly*). Let Him call me to account and I will answer Him according to His reckoning.

ELAD. Vows made in storms are forgotten in calms. What of your vow?

JEPHTHAH (*his face suddenly sharp and troubled*). My vow? Perhaps I did indeed do evil in his sight to vow rashly and seek to bribe the living God. (*Unconsciously he grips his sword, as the battle lives again before his eyes.*) Near midnight, and we had waged battle against Ammon since sunrise. My men exhausted, bleeding, nigh unto death. My sword-arm weak and wounded. From the hills pale fires burning where those of Ammon offered up sacrifices to their gods and prayed for victory. Could I have done otherwise, O my father?

ELAD. Beware false vows which lead to shame and dishonor. The vow which God has heard must be fulfilled.

JEPHTHAH (*sweeping on*). Leaning upon the arm of

Nathan, son of Amasa, I groped my way from the field. I had thought to fall on my sword, for I dared not fall alive into the hand of the Gentiles. Under the stars I cried upon the Lord — and He answered me.

ELAD (*sternly*). Yea, you called upon Him even as the heathen called upon their gods that night, offering strange flesh upon their altars in the hills.

JEPHTHAH. I was mad — mad with my pain and weariness — and fear. I, even I, Jephthah, knew fear at that moment. Not for myself, for my sword was ready, and though curs worry a dead lion, he feels not their fangs. But I feared for Sheilah, my little dove, whom my death would leave alone in the forest, prey to every snare of the fowler, daughter of an outcast in Israel.

ELAD (*softening a little*). So it was for little Sheilah you wrought this sin before the Lord?

JEPHTHAH. He will not account it for sin, as in my madness I knew not what I vowed.

ELAD. But I was not mad — nor was Nathan, son of Amasa, and we heard without mistaking the words you spoke before the Lord. (*Sternly*) Has your madness left you, that you in the light of day can recall the wild vow you pledged there in the darkness?

JEPHTHAH (*striving to speak calmly*). Surely, I recall the vow I made unto the Lord before He sent strength back into my arms and hope into my soul. (*Repeats with a sort of awed hesitancy.*) I vowed unto the Lord and said, "If Thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, whatsoever cometh out of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, it shall be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt offering."

ELAD. So did you vow — a rash vow and unholy from the mouth of a son of Israel.

JEPHTHAH. Can one come forth from a tomb? My house is as empty as a conquered city. Sheilah and Dinah, her nurse, have gone to join the women in Mizpeh who will dance before me with timbrels and with rejoicing. (NATHAN, *who has previously passed, now reënters, flowers twined about his sword and helmet.*) Ah, my good Nathan, have you seen your brethren?

NATHAN. Yea, my lord Jephthah, and it is well with them, even my aged father, Amasa. He comes with the other elders of Mizpeh to welcome you who have saved them out of the hand of Ammon. Growing impatient, they will seek you here.

JEPHTHAH (*nodding approval*). They come to do me honor. And my little Sheilah? Did she not shine bravely forth among the maids of Mizpeh?

NATHAN (*anxiously*). Nay, my lord. She was not with the others. But my sister Rachel said she remained at home to deck herself.

JEPHTHAH (*in sudden fear*). Is she within? (*Unconsciously he turns to his own door, crying out.*) Sheilah!

SHEILAH (*within*). Nay, Dinah, the circlet is fastened. Hasten — my father calls! (SHEILAH *comes bounding from the house, dressed in robes of white and rich purples and blues, a jeweled circlet and silvered veil about her head, timbrels in her hands.*)

SHEILAH. I am the first to greet you. Welcome home!

NATHAN (*crying out in terror*). Back! Back!

JEPHTHAH (*trying to push her hands away as she seeks to embrace him*). Return unto the house — return. (*Frantically*) Why did you come forth?

SHEILAH (*amazed*). To bid you welcome. (*Again trying to throw her arms about him as he turns away*) Father, look at me!

JEPHTHAH (*hoarsely*). What have I done that God should hate me so?

SHEILAH (*in hurt wonderment*). Father! (*She goes shyly to ELAD and bends to kiss his hand. He raises her and embraces her, his stern face quivering with emotion. She goes back to her father, timidly taking his hand.*) Perhaps you are wroth to see me robed in these? Dinah permitted me to deck myself thus, for she thought that it would please you to see me in my mother's festal garments. (*Shyly, her eyes falling before NATHAN's admiring glance*) She said that they became me. (*Falling before her father, she spreads out her glittering robes*) Father, will you not look at me?

NATHAN (*raising her and trying to draw her away*). Fret not your father.

SHEILAH. But I have not seen him these many months and now —

NATHAN. He is spent and worn after his wounds and many battles.

SHEILAH (*now all tender concern*). Father — you, perchance, are faint from your long march beneath the burning sun? (*He nods, unable to speak.*) Then, come, and I will take your helmet and your spear. (*Smilingly she disarms him.*) See, Nathan, again I act as armor-bearer to a captain in Israel. Give me your cloak, O my father. (*Her hands are filled; she pauses a moment to lean her head upon his shoulder.*) I will bring a cooling drink for you and you must rest before we go down into Mizpeh together.

JEPHTHAH (*to NATHAN*). Take her away. I cannot bear to look upon her face.

NATHAN (*to SHEILAH, relieving her of her burden as he leads her into the house*). Come — I will bear these things within for you. And Dinah, your nurse, will help

us to prepare a drink to refresh your father. (*The two go into the house, talking together, SHEILAH casting a glance at her father, half entreaty, half fear.*)

JEPHTHAH (*after a long silence, avoiding ELAD'S eyes*). The Lord cannot demand payment now. I knew not what I vowed.

ELAD (*quietly*). The vow that God has heard must be fulfilled.

JEPHTHAH (*pleading*). You must be silent. My victories have left me as a king; my wealth, my power — what are they worth without her, my only child, seeing that beside her I have neither sons nor daughters? And I will not play the miser with you — if you forget my vow, as I must do.

ELAD. I am a man of honor, an elder in Israel: yet you dare stain my ears with bribes!

JEPHTHAH (*with sudden craft*). Bribes? Am I not your son — even before the people — and are not my possessions and my praises yours? Now wealth will I give to keep your age from want, and in Mizpeh's gates shall my voice praise your name, bidding all men show you reverence.

ELAD (*with quiet scorn*). What are the promises of one forsworn? First pay the debt you owe unto the Lord our God.

JEPHTHAH (*broken, his spirit all gone from him*). Hear me for pity, then, since neither gold nor honor buys your silence. My child is all to me. Just now she stood there so like her own mother on her bridal day, I dreamed I saw her mother in her face — a stately maiden as beautiful as the sunrise — (*Abruptly*) Is it nothing to you that my only child must die?

ELAD (*with a sudden flare of anger*). It is much to me that the last of our blood must perish for your

folly, that our line must end should Sheilah's eyes close in death ere she leaves a child to call her "mother."

JEPHTHAH. Then mercy — since your bereaved heart will bleed with mine above her grave. What joy will remain for either of us, if she be gone?

ELAD (*himself again*). Our joys and griefs are ripples on a stream. The vow that God has heard must be fulfilled.

JEPHTHAH (*eagerly*). Perchance a vow made before the altar of the Lord and in the open day. But no man heard my vow save young Nathan, son of Amasa; and he loves her as his own soul. He will not chide me for my broken vow.

ELAD. But I heard — and I have not forgotten nor will I forget the vow you made before the Lord.

JEPHTHAH. Father!

ELAD (*unheeding*). I know with what rash promise you sought to bribe the Lord God, and if your memory stumble I will seek ever to keep your vow before your eyes. If you dare tempt the anger of the Lord by mocking Him, his righteous anger will not flame for you alone, but will consume all our land by reason of your sin. He inclined his ear to your voice; He gave to you the desire of your heart. Surely, He heard your vow and it must be fulfilled.

JEPHTHAH. Though you are merciless to me — be kind to her. She is so young; the flower of her life is opening to the sun and a golden path stretches before her. She must not die.

ELAD. Death is a little thing, but honor great. The vow that God has heard must be fulfilled.

JEPHTHAH (*heavily, without anger*). I think you must be as merciless as God.

(SHEILAH comes from the house bearing a goblet. She is followed by NATHAN and DINAH. The former looks greatly troubled in spite of his efforts to remain calm.)

DINAH (*with an obeisance to the two men*). Welcome, O my master. I have cared for the maid during your absence like a tender flower. (*Fondly*) Is she not like a rose in her festal dress?

JEPHTHAH (*holding SHEILAH at arms' length and speaking with a terrible longing*). A rose that whispers summer to my heart!

SHEILAH (*looking up at him brightly*). Ah, now you are my good father again! Come, taste of the drink I have just prepared for you.

JEPHTHAH (*taking cup*). A bitter drink you give to me, my child.

NATHAN (*hurriedly to JEPHTHAH, as DINAH draws SHEILAH away, fussily rearranging her veil*). See, the people of Mizpeh wait no longer. They will do you honor even before your house.

JEPHTHAH (*seizing his hand*). My vow!

NATHAN. It must be as though it had never been spoken. Only raise your head and look boldly upon the people, lest they think you a man afflicted by the hand of God.

(*The PEOPLE of Mizpeh enter in festal procession, the elders, led by AMASA, at their head. The SOLDIERS are in armor, their helmets and spears festooned with flowers. The women and children carry flowers. ZEBUL, the singer, stands with his harp among the maidens, who carry timbrels which they clash as they move.*)

AMASA (*as the great shouting dies away*). No longer would we bide by the city's gate to bid you welcome,

O Jephthah. Great wonders have you wrought for us in the battlefield; all that is ours — our hands, our homes, our hearts, are yours, seeing that your hand has delivered us from the children of Ammon.

JEPHTHAH (*lifelessly*). Not I, but the Lord brought low our enemy. I conquered only in His name.

ELAD (*warningly*). And if a man deny Him —

ZEBUL (*slight and boyish, clad in white and gold*). Women of Mizpeh, cast flowers before the feet of him who delivered us from Ammon. Maidens, sound your timbrels and cry aloud his name before all the people.

(The women and children shower JEPHTHAH with flowers as he stands on the doorsteps, his hand upon NATHAN'S shoulder, his face hard and white. Then, at a signal from ZEBUL, the maidens whirl into a festal dance, clashing their timbrels as they move. The dance is wild and barbaric in its fierce joy: through it all flashes the figure of JEPHTHAH'S daughter, who at the last, casts her timbrels aside and dances with her father's sword held in triumph above her head.)

PEOPLE OF MIZPEH (*as dance ends and maidens prostrate themselves before JEPHTHAH*). Hail — Jephthah — hail !

A WOMAN (*bringing two little children to JEPHTHAH*). Deliverer of Israel, may not my children kiss your garment's hem, that in years to come they may boast of it, speaking of this day of days?

JEPHTHAH (*drawing back as though in terror*). No — no !

AN OLD MAN (*richly dressed and followed by his slaves*). O my lord Jephthah, make glad the heart of your servant by accepting a few poor trinkets out of his hand. (*He presses upon JEPHTHAH two golden caskets he takes from his slaves.*) Accept these, my lord, and honor the giver

in your acceptance. (*From one of the caskets, which JEPHTHAH with a gesture almost of horror has handed to NATHAN, he draws forth a glittering diadem.*) I know this is too mean a trifle to encircle the brow of him who saved us from Ammon (*with the mock humility of the Orient*), though it has long been cherished in our house, for 't is said my ancestor brought it out of Egypt and even Pharaoh might have worn it without shame. (*With another bow*) And deign to take these poor vials, filled with rare oils and strange ointments, unworthy your notice, though they might anoint a king on his crowning day.

JEPHTHAH (*protesting*). No — no — not for me such gifts and such homage.

NATHAN. Be strong, my lord, and of good courage. (*Seeking to divert the people, who have begun to look upon JEPHTHAH curiously, talking among themselves*) Sing, Zebul, sing a festal song for our rejoicing.

VOICES. Take your harp, O singer of God, and play upon it.

(*ZEBUL rises upon the rocks and plays a prelude upon his harp before he begins his song. Whenever he pauses, the people continue, improvising in their joy.*)

ZEBUL.

I will sing unto the Lord,

I will sing praise to the Lord, the God of Israel.

WOMEN.

We will sing of the victories of Israel.

WARRIORS.

We will sing of the triumph of Jephthah before the Lord.

WOMEN.

Lo, Ammon was upon us;

Ammon laid waste our cities,

And our virgins he carried into captivity.

WARRIORS.

We took up the sword against Ammon;
But Ammon stood as a rock,
And our hearts were troubled within us.

ZEBUL.

Then arose Jephthah like a star in the darkness,
Even as a star that brings deliverance in the night season;
He unsheathed the sword and Ammon trembled before him;
He went forth into battle and the horsemen of Ammon fled
before his coming.

WARRIORS.

The princes of Ammon fled, leaving their weapons behind them;

WOMEN.

The women of Ammon wail upon the mountains for those who
return not from battle.

ZEBUL.

All this has Jephthah accomplished for the sake of Israel:
He raised his hand and he conquered,
He went forth to battle and his captains divided the spoil.

(ZEBUL *pauses for a moment, his fingers wandering dreamily over the strings. ELAD comes close to JEPHTHAH, his face stern and threatening.*)

ELAD. I will look no longer upon this mockery. Every honor, every praise uttered to your name will do more to kindle the anger of the God you have denied. Strip yourself of deceit and show yourself to the people for what you are — the breaker of your oath even to God.

JEPHTHAH (*indicating SHEILAH as she stands listening to NATHAN*). I cannot.

ELAD. Speak you — or I will speak.

AMASA (*warningly*). Hush — again the singer speaks for God.

ZEBUL (*his face rapt*).

I will sing unto the Lord,
I will sing praise unto the Lord, the God of Israel;
For with oil hath He filled my cup,
He hath filled my cup even to overflowing;
Therefore will I praise the Lord,
Therefore will I magnify His name forever and ever.

JEPHTHAH (*turning to ELAD and crying out passionately*). Cease with your music and rejoicing! (ZEBUL comes down from his place on the rocks. The people look at each other in amazed fear.)

SHEILAH (*throwing herself before her father*). Father — my father — what hidden grief tears at your heart? What bitter thing troubles you?

JEPHTHAH (*dully*). Alas, my daughter, you have brought me low. You alone trouble me. For I have sworn and I dare not turn back.

NATHAN (*coming to him quickly*). For her sake be silent.

ELAD. Speak, Jephthah — will you tell the people, or must I?

NATHAN. Peace — Elad — peace!

ELAD. Nay, he must speak, for who can hide from God? Speak, Jephthah — tell of your bargain with the Lord. Let the people judge betwixt you.

(JEPHTHAH *tries to speak, hesitates, turns away. The people murmur among themselves.*)

TIRZAH. The hand of God has touched him; he would speak and yet is dumb.

NATHAN (*pleadingly*). You will not tell them?

JEPHTHAH. I must speak; for if my tongue is silent he will accuse me. And I feel God is on his side, not mine. (*To the people*) You praise me for my hard-won battles, the cities I have taken by my spear. Praise instead the Lord God of Israel who led me on and brought me at last unto victory.

AMASA. Surely, we praise Him without measure for saving us through your hand.

JEPHTHAH. If there be justice in Mizpeh, hear my words and judge fairly between me and this man, even my father. Learn how I bribed the Lord God to do

battle for your sakes and brought victory out of his hand that Israel might not perish from the earth.

NATHAN. You are mad. I pray you, do not speak.

JEPHTHAH. Nay, my son. Perhaps it is better that the men of Mizpeh decide this thing and bid me do what seems right in their eyes. Can I fear their decision, seeing that they are fathers with the love of their own children in their hearts? (*He turns again to the wondering people.*) Hear, then, how I bribed our God that He might lead us unto peace: I, even I, Jephthah, son of Elad, raised my hands to Him in the darkness and cried unto Him: "If Thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, whatsoever cometh out of my house to meet me when I return in peace, it shall be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt offering."

SHEILAH (*half understanding*). My father!

JEPHTHAH (*appealing to NATHAN*). Were these the words I spoke to God?

NATHAN (*passionately*). He did not hear your words — He did not hear.

JEPHTHAH (*to the people*). And as I approached the gates of Mizpeh to-day, my daughter came to meet me. These two know she was the first to come from out my house.

(DINAH holds SHEILAH in sudden terror. The people draw back.)

JEPHTHAH. Men of Mizpeh, men of Mizpeh, tell me, must I keep such a vow, made in the madness of battle when I knew not what I vowed?

AMASA (*doubtfully to ELAD*). Throughout Mizpeh and Gilead, men speak of your wisdom in the gates and come to you for judgment. Advise us out of your knowledge, O Elad, and tell us, must he keep this vow?

ELAD. The vow that God has heard must be fulfilled.

Else will his anger consume all Mizpeh and the people therein, because you forced not Jephthah to fulfill his vow.

JEPHTHAH. My friends, — you are my friends, now that I have saved you from Ammon, — friends, it was for your sake I vowed, and if I sinned I sinned for your sake, also. If I fail in payment and his anger be kindled against Mizpeh, will you not bear it willingly, since it is I who saved you out of the hand of Ammon?

JOSIAH (*leaving his place among the warriors*). I am a soldier — a poor, plain man, not wise in the ways of the Lord as you, O elders in Israel. (*He indicates AMASA and ELAD.*) But this I know — Jephthah has fought for the Lord of Battles as no man ever fought for Him before. Surely, with Jephthah's blood shed upon the battlefield the Lord will wash out all remembrance of the vow he made for Mizpeh.

ELAD. Not so — for God remembers and is just.

JOSIAH. Then if He does indeed demand a sacrifice, since it was for Mizpeh Jephthah sinned, let one of Mizpeh atone. Let me be slain upon the altar. I have lived my days and there are none to mourn for me; but this young maid is like a meadow flower. (*Murmurs half of relief, half of anger among the people.* JEPHTHAH seizes JOSIAH'S hand.)

ELAD. Though a dozen men and maidens be offered upon the altar, yet will his wrath not diminish against Mizpeh. Yet will you harbor in your midst a mocker of God, a breaker of vows. If thus you seek to cheat the God of Truth, from this day no vow is safe in Israel.

ZEBUL (*rousing himself from his reverie*). If God require this child for a sacrifice, He will speak. But, surely, the maid is guiltless and she must not die.

ELAD (*bitterly*). Yet must all the guiltless in Mizpeh

perish, because we did not prevent Jephthah when he sought to break his vow?

NATHAN (*appealing to AMASA*). My father, you are the first of the elders of Mizpeh. You have the ear of the people even as Elad. Speak to them — urge them that they forbid Jephthah to lay hand upon his child.

AMASA (*heavily*). My son — my son — and you sought her for your bride! (*He turns to the people waiting for his words, hesitates, goes to JEPHTHAH and takes his hand.*) I would that I might comfort you and yet only bitter words can fall from my tongue to-day. This youth — (*his hand on NATHAN'S shoulder*) is very dear to me in the pride and splendor of his manhood. Yet had I vowed as you, and had the Lord God so smitten me for my presumption, him would I sacrifice to appease the righteous wrath of the Most High.

NATHAN (*protesting*). My father!

AMASA. I know that your child is your life, for we live only in our children. But can a man live without honor? Will the sons of men give heed to the pledges of one who has broken a vow made without compulsion and without force? No power in Israel can force you to do the thing that you have sworn to do, a thing so fearful that I dare not call it by name. But be warned, O Jephthah, that if you fail to keep your vow, every voice in Israel will cry out against you as a son of shame, a thing without honor, a breaker of vows.

JEPHTHAH (*cowering*). Cease — cease —

NATHAN (*turning on his father*). I looked to you to plead for the maid for the sake of mercy, and you have shown no mercy. You prate of shame and honor and vows, and by your words would shed innocent blood. Tenderness do you feel for the honor of Jephthah, but you would send his daughter under the sacrificial knife.

AMASA (*shocked at his rebellion*). My son — you speak to your father!

NATHAN. Nay, I speak to an elder in Israel, who bears the name of Justice on his lips, but serves her not in his heart. And in seeking to do that which is pleasing to the Lord God, you men of wisdom and elders before the people have gone groping in the darkness. Cruelty has blinded your eyes and you stumble as you go. Cease then to prate of Justice, but learn to know her ways. For I, too, will call upon Justice to spare the daughter of Jephthah in her innocence.

(*Murmurs among the people.* JEPHTHAH raises his haggard face, almost daring to hope.)

NATHAN (*pointing to SHEILAH who stands near her father*). This maiden is my betrothed wife. Do not the elders in Israel know that her father has no power over her, that she was not his to dedicate to the Lord when he made his vow?

(*The people give a great cry of relief.* JEPHTHAH breaks down utterly and gropes to reach SHEILAH, but she has already hurried to NATHAN, who clasps her in his arms.)

NATHAN (*as he draws her from the rest*). Beloved, will you take life from my hands at such a price? Will you wed me, though I dared to speak of you as mine without a word from you to comfort me during these months of doubt and waiting?

SHEILAH (*shyly, not daring to look at him*). If you had not loved me, I should have been glad to die, for only in your love are joy and life for me.

DINAH. Praise to the God of Israel, who would not suffer the innocent to perish! (*She crosses to SHEILAH and embraces her tenderly, before leading her to her father.*)

JEPHTHAH (*brokenly, as he blesses her*). My daughter, my little white dove, will you forgive me?

SHEILAH. You knew not what you vowed. (*She goes a little timidly to ELAD, who stands wrathfully apart.*) And have you no betrothal blessing for me, O my grandfather?

ELAD (*in a voice of cold anger*). How can I bless that which the Lord has already cursed?

(*SHEILAH shrinks back, the people growing vaguely disturbed under the implied menace in his words.*)

AMASA. Hard words to welcome a bride in Israel!

ELAD. Better she had never seen the light than to establish a home, the pillars of which are treachery and the foundations deceit.

JEPHTHAH. O my father, would you shame your own blood before the eyes of all Mizpeh?

ELAD. You do well, my son, to remind me that she is of my blood. Is she not doubly dear to me, seeing my other sons and their children are all dead, and that through her and her children I hoped to see my name live on in Israel? But, dearer to me than my own blood are righteousness and fair dealing. Though every man in Mizpeh turn his hand to trickery and applaud falsehood, still will I cry out against you. Though you seem to prosper in your evil, yet in the end will you think upon my warning, for you will know that it is without profit to cheat God.

NATHAN. Must I tell an elder in Israel that the husband and not the father of a betrothed maiden is her master? That if she is betrothed, she is already as his wife and no man can take her from him?

ELAD (*bitingly*). If she be betrothed!

NATHAN. Her father consented to my suit a month of days ere he vowed her away.

ELAD. Is this a betrothal in Israel? Where were the

witnesses, where the betrothal ring, the dowry bestowed upon the virgin, and the writing which bound her to you as your wife? (*He turns upon JEPHTHAH savagely.*) I have fought a good fight for your honor and I have failed. Save your child by a trick and deceive the God beneath whose wings she would dwell in Israel. But may death close my eyes ere they behold the payment He will demand of the tricksters of Mizpeh! (*He turns to go, but NATHAN stands in his path.*)

NATHAN. I have sought to keep silent, for I am but a youth and how dare I speak wrathfully to an aged head so honored in Israel? But no man shall say I win my bride by fraud and double dealing. (*He turns desperately to the people, drawing SHEILAH before them.*) I will not take her for my wedded wife until every voice in Mizpeh proclaim our nuptial blessing, until every tongue declare that he speaks not for the God whose honor he would defend, but out of the doubtful imagination of his own heart. (*He turns to ZEBUL.*) Zebul, you are the maker of music, the singer of God, and, being near his heart, you hear his voice. Speak, seer, and tell us, must the maiden die?

ZEBUL (*speaking slowly after a long pause*). E'en I, the singer of God, must falter in my speaking, for how shall mortal man know the will of his Maker? But this I know — the smoke on grudging altars will not rise; the wreath unwilling fingers place upon the shrine will wither in an hour. We must give gladly, if we give to Him.

SHEILAH (*stepping out quickly*). And I give gladly when I give myself.

NATHAN (*seeking to silence her*). You are mad!

SHEILAH. He is mad who would dissuade me. I have listened while the elders spoke and now I know that

my father's vow must be fulfilled and that my feet must follow the path his words have made for me. (*She goes to him quietly.*) Father, since you have vowed unto the Lord, offering up my young life, even for the sake of Mizpeh, then do to me according to your vow.

NATHAN. No — Sheilah —

AMASA (*restraining him*). Nay, let the maiden speak.

SHEILAH. I do not know why this thing has come to me. Yesterday my life stretched before my feet like a meadow cool with streams and bright with flowers. I thought that God's hand would lead me along the quiet household ways my mother knew and that I would serve Him best by rearing strong sons to fight for Israel.

NATHAN. God would not have it otherwise, although your father again and yet again vowed away your life.

SHEILAH (*with sudden spirit*). Think you I lay this thing upon God and believe in my heart that He desires such a sacrifice? Nay, for He is the God of love and pities all his creatures. Think you if I have care to feed the shy brown birds and sorrow o'er the flower my foot has trampled in passing, that He, the Maker of the world, will be less loving to the creatures He has made? Surely, He Himself will grieve for my death and pity me, cut off in the spring and promise of my years.

DINAH. Truly, He would take no delight in your death. Live and be happy and forget your father's vow.

SHEILAH. I might forget — but the men of Mizpeh would remember. If I live, then must his new-found honor die.

DINAH (*clinging to her*). What is his honor worth against your life? You are as my child and I would not live to weep above your grave. (*Turning to the people who shrink back.*) O men of Mizpeh, loose him from his vow!

SHEILAH. You see, they do not answer. From the day of his birth has my father borne a shame not of his own making. The son of the foreign woman, what has he known but scorn from Gilead? And now that with his own blood he has bought a clean name among you, shall I permit him to lose it for my sake?

NATHAN. And what of me? Let the elders speak of witnesses and the ring of betrothal! What are these things to us who love one another? Before I asked your father for your hand, did not your eyes tell me your love was mine? Did not the touch of your hand before I followed your father to the wars bind us together even before God? (*He draws a broad gold bracelet from his girdle and slips it upon her wrist.*) This did you give to me on parting and I shall not rest until it becomes indeed the ring of betrothal and as my wife you cross the threshold of my house.

SHEILAH (*smiling sadly*). And what gifts could I bring my husband? Shame and the mockery of the men of Mizpeh because I am Jephthah's daughter and live through his dishonor. Death would be easier than life with such a memory crouching beside our hearth.

NATHAN (*brokenly*). O Sheilah — Sheilah —

SHEILAH (*with a touch of tenderness already strangely impersonal*). Nay, my Nathan, nay, old playmate — do not grieve that this great thing has come to me — to raise my father high before the people and make of my name a golden memory for all days. We little dreamed of this when in the springtime we played together knee-deep among the meadow flowers. (*Her hands unconsciously caressing the flowers she picks from those tossed before JEPHTHAH, her eyes turned longingly toward the spring-flushed hills.*) I never thought that I should die in spring.

DINAH (*wailing*). You must not die !

(*The other women take up her lament with all the passionate grief of the Orient.*)

SHEILAH (*giving way at their voices*). Hearken, ye mountains, to my lamentations, and you, O hills, to the tears of my eyes ! Rocks, testify to the weeping of my soul and to the grief that is in me ! I have not been granted the joy of marriage nor was the wreath of my betrothal completed. I have not been decked with ornaments by the hand of the bridegroom, nor have I been scented with perfume and with myrrh. Alas, O mother, it was in vain you gave me birth ; the grave was destined to be my bridal chamber.

DINAH (*wailing*). The oil I prepared for your anointing must be spilled. The moths will eat the white garments I wove for your bridal.

SHEILAH. The bridal wreath my nurse twined for me will wither. (*She tears from her hair the myrtle entwined in her diadem.*) I shall take no pride in my garments of purple and blue.

MAIDENS. We will lament over your passing — we will grieve because you have been cut off in the flower of your life.

SHEILAH. I have danced in the sunshine and sung in the early morning. (*Turning to maidens*) Now must you rend your garments as I go alone into the darkness.

JEPHTHAH (*crying from his broken heart*). My daughter — O my daughter !

SHEILAH (*her own grief forgotten for his sake*). O my father, look upon my face ! (*She raises his head from his arms, forcing him to look at her.*) Look at me, father. See — I am not afraid.

JEPHTHAH (*meeting her eyes at last*). What will you have of me, my daughter, in this heavy hour ?

SHEILAH. Grant me that I may go with my companions up to the mountains to sojourn there while I grieve for my lost youth. Let me abide there two months with these maidens and they will lament with me as for one already dead. Yea, even the trees should weep for me and the birds mourn in their singing, seeing that I who so loved them must depart alone out of the land of the living. And when the two months are over, then will I come down into Mizpeh and you shall do to me according to your vow. (JEPHTHAH *nods, unable to speak. He embraces her silently. She turns to the maidens.*) Come with me, and as we go we will gather flowers and sing merry songs — the songs the companions of the bride sing, when all rejoicing they bring her to her husband's house.

DINAH (*as the girls gather about SHEILAH*). Child — child — have you no word for me?

SHEILAH. Dear, cross old Dinah — you must never scold me again. Come, you will go with us to the city's gate. (*With her arm about DINAH, she goes to JEPHTHAH who stands with his face hidden, leaning against the door-post. She looks at him longingly, is about to embrace him, shakes her head. Silently approaches ELAD and kisses the hem of his cloak. His face working with emotion, he blesses her. With a grave obeisance to AMASA and the other elders, is about to follow the singing maidens off toward Mizpeh, when NATHAN catches her hand.*)

NATHAN. Sheilah — is this your farewell to me?

(*For a moment she sways against DINAH, then withdraws her hand and smiles up at him, a grave, detached smile.*)

SHEILAH. In two months I shall return.

(*The bridal music rises in happy chorus as she follows the maidens, supporting the weeping DINAH. For a*

moment there is silence among the people. Suddenly ZEBUL, with a passionate gesture, breaks the strings of his harp.)

ZEBUL. O harp that sang of triumph, be forever dumb! (*He points to the bowed figure of JEPHTHAH before his house.*)

(Slowly the festal procession wends its way toward Mizpeh, the grief-stricken faces in strange contrast to the bridal chorus of the maidens, who repeat again and again: "She will come to the bridegroom with rejoicing, with singing and the sound of harps!" Alone, JEPHTHAH tears the garlands of rejoicing from the doorposts of his house.)

[CURTAIN]

A MINUET ¹

LOUIS N. PARKER

Dedicated to Elsie Leslie

CHARACTERS

THE MARQUIS

THE MARCHIONESS

THE GAOLER

TIME: *During the "Reign of Terror."*

SCENE: *The living-room in the GAOLER'S quarters in the prison of the Conciergerie. There is only one door, and that is at the back. In an angle is a window, heavily barred inside and out. Through this the upper stories of houses can be seen. These are lighted up now and then with a wavering glare as of passing torches. The room is but sparsely furnished. There is a rickety table toward the spectator's left, with a straw-bottomed chair beside it. There are two or three other similar chairs. In one corner is a small iron stove, with a chimney-pipe which meanders deviously and finally goes out through one of the top panes of the window. In another corner is a minute metal washing-apparatus. It is night. The room is lighted by a*

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lamp with a green shade, suspended from the ceiling. On the walls are caricatures of the King, Revolutionary placards, and a pleasing picture of the guillotine.²

The MARQUIS, elegantly, but soberly, dressed, is seated at the table, reading in a small, calf-bound book.

THE MARQUIS (*reading*)

“Is there an after-life, a deathless soul,
A heaven, to which to aspire as to a goal?
Who shall decide what nobody may know?
Science is dumb; Faith has no proofs to show.
Men will dispute, as autumn leaves will rustle:
The soul is an idea; the heart, a muscle.”

(He leaves off reading.)

Well said, Voltaire! This philosophic doubt
Has ruled my life, and now shall lead me out;
'T is this has helped me to a mind serene
While I await the gentle guillotine.

(He closes the book and lays it aside.)

What 's to be hoped for, what is to be dreaded,
Whether I die in bed or be beheaded?
I've lived; I've loved; enjoyed; and here's the end.
I'll meet my death as I should meet a friend;
Or, better, as a nobleman of France
Salutes his mistress in a courtly dance.

(He rises and walks to and fro, with his hands behind him.)

I am alone; no soul will sorrow for me;
My enemies dread me; and my friends — abhor me.
For all I know, my wife — the ugly word! —
Is in Coblenz, attended by absurd,
Perfumed, and mincing abbés. She and I,

² This scenic direction is a counsel of perfection. The play can quite well be performed in any ordinary room without scenery. — L. N. P.

I'm proud to say, lived as I mean to die,
 With never a trace of middle-class emotions;
 I went my way; she followed her own notions;
 And when she hears I'm dead, so fine her breed,
 She'll arch her eyebrows, and exclaim, "Indeed?"

(The door is flung open, and THE GAOLER appears.)

GAOLER

(brutally)

Citizen!

MARQUIS

Joseph?

(He sits.)

Is the tumbril here?

GAOLER

Not yet, aristocrat; but have no fear.
 The widow never missed —

MARQUIS

The — widow?

GAOLER

Aye,

The guillotine.

MARQUIS

(with a shrug)

The people's wit!

GAOLER

I say,

She never missed an assignation yet.
 One down, t' other come on! She'll not forget.

MARQUIS

Yet she's a woman! Wonderful!

GAOLER

You seem
As though you thought your doom was but a dream.
(*roughly*)
Aristocrat, you are to die!

MARQUIS

(*calmly*)
How true!
And so are you, my friend—and so are you,
Sooner or later. In your case, I think
It will be sooner, owing to the drink.

GAOLER

(*coming at him threateningly*)
You dare —!

MARQUIS

(*warding him off with a delicate hand*)
Oh, please, let's have no vulgar quarrel!
And I apologize for seeming moral.
You've been so courteous as to — lend — your room
In which to await my, as you call it, "doom."
(*handing him a coin*)
Take my last louis, friend, and go away.

GAOLER

I spit on it!

MARQUIS

And pocket it. Good-day.

GAOLER

(*pointing to the door*)
I came to tell you that a woman's there,
Asking to see you.

MARQUIS

What?

GAOLER

She's young and fair,
And, judging by the richness of her dress,
Some heretofore aristo, nothing less.

MARQUIS

(with grave reproof)

All women are aristocrats by birth;
No old or ugly woman treads the earth.

GAOLER

Ho! you should see my wife!

MARQUIS

I should be proud.

GAOLER

Shall I admit her?

MARQUIS

Yes.

GAOLER

It's not allowed.

Nevertheless —

MARQUIS

(handing him a jeweled snuff-box)

My snuff-box. From
(he springs to his feet and kisses it.)

The King!

GAOLER

I spit on it.

MARQUIS

(deprecatingly)

You spit on everything.

That 's low.

GAOLER

The widow will spit out your head.

(He stumps out, leaving the door open.)

MARQUIS

(with disgust)

And that 's my equal! Pah!

(He picks up a hand-glass and arranges his jabot.)

Why do I dread

This meeting? Who can be the fair

Who ventures hither to this loathsome lair?

The Duchess of Saint-Maur? A heart of ice.

The Countess of Durance? A cockatrice.

The Marchioness of Beaurepaire? Alas!

Her love and faith were brittle as this glass.

The Lady of Bougency?

(He laughs.)

But she had

Three other lovers, while she drove me mad.

Not one would risk her head to say good-bye

To a discarded lover soon to die.

Can it be Jenny of the Palais Royal?

I never met a woman half so loyal.

She brought her innocence into my life;

She almost loved me — for a while.

(In the glass he is holding he sees the MARCHIONESS, who now appears in the doorway.)

My wife!

(The MARCHIONESS comes in, and the door swings to with a clang. She makes a magnificent and elaborate curtsy.)

MARCHIONESS

Marquis !

MARQUIS

(with an equally elaborate bow)

Ah ! Marchioness !

MARCHIONESS

(brightly)

Milord O'Connor

Kindly escorted me.

MARQUIS

Oh ! too much honor !

MARCHIONESS

*(looking round the room; with a dainty sigh)*Ah, what a world, where gentlemen are treated
Like vulgar criminals !

MARQUIS

Won't you be seated ?

MARCHIONESS

*(ceremoniously taking her seat)*I greatly fear I must cut short my visit;
Time is so precious nowadays.

MARQUIS

(with a whimsical smile)

Ah ! Is it ?

How did you hear that I must soon — go hence ?

MARCHIONESS

A charming abbé told me in Coblenz.

MARQUIS

(leading her on)

What did you say ?

MARCHIONESS

I scarce gave any heed.

I arched my eyebrows, and exclaimed, "Indeed?"

MARQUIS

Ah! — I'm distressed you chose to undertake
A long and tiresome journey for my sake.

MARCHIONESS

(volubly)

Oh, I had charming company! Time passed away
Quite quickly, thanks to ombre and piquet.

(with a pretty pout)

I lost a deal of money.

MARQUIS

My regrets.

I've squandered my last coin.

MARCHIONESS

And then at Metz

A charming man, an Irishman — such grace!
Such wit! Such —

MARQUIS

Never mind.

MARCHIONESS

Begged for a place

Beside me in my coach.

MARQUIS

His name?

MARCHIONESS

Milord

O'Connor.

MARQUIS

To be sure. He — touched a chord?

MARCHIONESS

(enthusiastically)

Oh, yes!

MARQUIS

(insidiously)

And you were — kind?

MARCHIONESS

(roguishly)

To him or you?

MARQUIS

(with a polite protest)

Oh, dying men don't count.

MARCHIONESS

(thinking it over)

That's very true.

MARQUIS

No doubt he's waiting for you now?

MARCHIONESS

(carelessly)

No doubt.

MARQUIS

You must not strain his patience; 't will wear out.

(with great courtesy, but a dangerous gleam in his eyes)

And when you join him, tell him I regret

I'm not at liberty. We might have — met.

MARCHIONESS

You would have liked each other very much.

Such conversation! Such high spirits! Such —

MARQUIS

(rises)

This prison is no place for you. Farewell!

MARCHIONESS

The room is ugly. I prefer my cell.

MARQUIS

(arrested as he is moving toward the door)

Your — cell?

MARCHIONESS

*(matter of fact)*Of course. I am a prisoner, too.
That's what I came for.

MARQUIS

What?

MARCHIONESS

(very simply)

To die with you.

MARQUIS

To die with me!

MARCHIONESS

(rises)

A Beaulerc could not fail.

MARQUIS

But —

MARCHIONESS

Yes?

MARQUIS

The guillotine!

MARCHIONESS

(brushing it aside as of no consequence whatever)

A mere detail.

MARQUIS

(recovering)

Pardon me, Marchioness, but I confess
You almost made me show surprise.

MARCHIONESS

What less

Did you expect of me?

MARQUIS

We've lived apart

So long, I had forgotten —

MARCHIONESS

I'd a heart?

You had forgotten many things beside —
The happy bridegroom and the happy bride.
And so had I. At court the life we lead
Makes love a frivolous pastime.

MARQUIS

(gravely)

And we need

The shock of death to show us we are human.

MARCHIONESS

Marquis and Marchioness? No! Man and woman.
(Pause)

Once you were tender.

MARQUIS

Once you were sincere.

MARCHIONESS

So long ago!

MARQUIS

So short a time!

MARCHIONESS

Oh, dear!

Our minds are like a potpourri at dusk,
 Breathing dead rosemary, lavender, and musk;
 Things half forgotten, silly things — sublime!
 A faded ribbon, withered rose, a rhyme,
 A melody of old Provence, whose lilt
 Haunts us as in a dream, like amber, spilt
 God knows how long ago!

MARQUIS

Do you remember
 How first I wooed you by the glowing ember
 Of winter fires?

MARCHIONESS

Ah, you were passionate then!

MARQUIS

I was the proudest, happiest of men.

MARCHIONESS

I, the most innocent of maids.

MARQUIS

Alas!

How the years change us as they come and pass!

MARCHIONESS

*(very tenderly)*¹ Do you remember, by the Rhone,

¹ The following thirty-four lines form a Ballade with a double refrain and the Envoi. They must be spoken lyrically and consecutively, with a slight stress on the refrains, so that the hearer may appreciate the shape of the poem. — L. N. P.

The gray old castle on the hill,
The brambled pathway to the mill?
You plucked a rose. We were alone;
For cousins need no chaperon.

How hot the days were, which the shrill
Cicala's chirping seemed to fill:
A treble to the mill-wheel's drone!
Ah, me! what happy days were those!

MARQUIS

Gone, with the perfume of the rose.

I called you Doris, for I own
"Meg" on my fancy cast a chill.

MARCHIONESS

I called you Amadis! You will
Admit no knightlier name is known.
We were like fledglings newly flown.

MARQUIS

Like little children: Jack and Jill.

MARCHIONESS

With many a scratch and many a spill
We scrambled over stick and stone.

MARQUIS

Ah, me! what happy days were those!

MARCHIONESS

Gone, with the perfume of the rose.

MARQUIS

Over lush meadows, thickly strown
With daisy and with daffodil,
We ran at dawn to catch the trill

Of larks on wild wing sunward blown :

MARCHIONESS

In orange-groves we heard the moan
Of love-lorn nightingales, until
You pressed my hand. A tender thrill
Was in your touch and in your tone.
Ah, me ! what happy days were those !

MARQUIS

Gone, with the perfume of the rose.

MARCHIONESS

Marquis, might we not yet atone
For all our errors, if we chose ?

MARQUIS

But — Doris, all the perfume's gone.

MARCHIONESS

(producing a withered rose from her bosom)
But — Amadis, I've kept the rose !

MARQUIS

You've kept the rose ! But will it bloom again ?

MARCHIONESS

Perhaps in heaven.

MARQUIS

(with a shrug)

Is there a heaven ?

GAOLER

(appearing at the door)

You twain

Aristocrats, the tumbril waits !

(He disappears.)

MARCHIONESS

(swaying a moment)

Ah, me !

MARQUIS

(eagerly)

Is there a heaven, Doris ?

MARCHIONESS

(recovering, smiles bravely, and holds out her hand.)

Come and see.

(The Marquis takes her hand and they go out.)

[CURTAIN]

THE PLAY OF SAINT GEORGE

J. M. C. CRUM

MUMMERS

THE KING

THE QUEEN and her TRAIN-BEARER

THE PRINCESS UNA and about six LADIES

SAINT GEORGE

THE MAYOR

FOUR COUNCILLORS

THE JESTER

THE WORKINGMAN

TWO GUARDS

THE BAND

NOTE: *Special music was written for this play by Harold W. Rhodes, F.R.C.O. However, the words of most of the songs may be simply spoken without lessening their effect, or they may be fitted to familiar melodies for singing. The Princess Una and Saint George should, if possible, be singers.*

Saint George can also act in Scenes I and II as a guard. The Mayor need not sing. Two Councillors become Bill and Joe (the Dragon's four legs) in the third scene. The Jester should be an actor. The Band should contain about four quite small children. The Mummers should number from twenty to twenty-five in all.

This play has been used by players without great skill or properties beyond two chairs and a cushion.

It needs no scenery; but if the actors so desire they may plan a setting for it. Saint George should wear a white cloak, with a red cross upon it.

SCENE I

Enter the PLAYERS in procession in order as below.

"MUMMERS ON"

We are a coming-a,
Fifing and drumming-a;
We are a coming-a-
Long the way;
We are a coming-a,
Singing and humming-a;
You 'll see a mumming-a
If you 'll stay.
We have a knight and
We have a princess and
We have a king and
A lady queen;
We have a mayor and
Councillors such as you
Never before in your
Life have seen.

CHORUS: We are a coming-a, *etc.*

We have a dragon;
We have a jester, a
Jester in motley, and
Guards in green;
We have a band and
Drummer-boys such as you
Never before in your
Life have seen.

We are a coming-a, *etc.*,

(With this song the company enters and morris-steps around the stage. BAND, GUARDS, KING, QUEEN, A TRAIN-BEARER, UNA, COURT LADIES, MAYOR, COUNCILLORS, and WORKINGMAN. They sing and dance round until they have had enough of it, and then exeunt, leaving MAYOR and four COUNCILLORS. The MAYOR in the middle, two COUNCILLORS on each side.)

SONG: THE FOUR COUNCILLORS

- FIRST COUNCILLOR. What shall we do, good friends
 and neighbors?
- SECOND COUNCILLOR. I should suggest a Dragon-
 trap —
- THIRD COUNCILLOR. Vain are the Corporation's la-
 bors —
- FOURTH COUNCILLOR. Truly he heeds us not a rap.
- ALL. We sent a crier out to say
 All dragons must henceforth go
 muzzled;
 Yet was he in the schools to-day,
 Half of our standard sixth he
 guzzled,
 Swallowed five little lads at play,
 Then with a mistress flew away.
- FIRST COUNCILLOR. I 've lost two sisters and a cousin—
- SECOND COUNCILLOR. I 've lost three aunts and uncles
 four —
- THIRD COUNCILLOR. Soldiers are missing by the
 dozen —
- FOURTH COUNCILLOR. Babies and nursemaids by the
 score —
- FIRST COUNCILLOR. Fie on his monstrous greediness!

SECOND COUNCILLOR. Fie on his wicked angry passions !

THIRD COUNCILLOR. Could you but see his ugliness !

FOURTH COUNCILLOR. Could you but hear his vile expressions !

ALL. Now he 's demanding nothing less
Than our Serene and High Princess.

ALL FOUR. The Mayor of this historic Borough
Without delay must tell the
King

He must be brave and prompt
and thorough;

We 've had enough of paltering.

Now let him strike a royal blow,

Let him be brave and prompt
and thorough,

Now let him lay the Dragon low,

Let it be now and not to-morrow —

Something the King must do —
but oh —

What that may be — we hardly
know.

THE MAYOR (*speaks*)

Now on this city lies a curse

And things get worse —

FIRST COUNCILLOR

And worse —

SECOND COUNCILLOR

And worse.

MAYOR

It 's months since our last city dinner,
We all grow thinner —

FIRST COUNCILLOR

thinner —

SECOND COUNCILLOR

thinner.

MAYOR

We 've lost all fancy for the flagon:
It 's all that Dragon—

FIRST *and* SECOND COUNCILLORS (*together*)

All that Dragon.

MAYOR

We 've lost all pleasure in the platter
And he grows fatter —

FIRST COUNCILLOR

fatter —

SECOND COUNCILLOR

fatter.

MAYOR

I am your mayor; you look to me
For comfort in adversity.
And, truly, I should think it right
To go and fight —

FIRST COUNCILLOR

And fight?

SECOND COUNCILLOR

And fight?

MAYOR

Yes, go and fight him hot and brisk —
But for the risk.

FIRST COUNCILLOR

The risk —

SECOND COUNCILLOR

The risk.

MAYOR

And you, I know, could never bear
To risk the mayor —

FIRST COUNCILLOR

The mayor —

SECOND COUNCILLOR

The mayor.

MAYOR

Your mayor so wise, so good, so grave,
Your mayor so brave —

FIRST COUNCILLOR

So brave —

SECOND COUNCILLOR

So brave!

(At this moment the DRAGON is heard behind the scenes. The four COUNCILLORS run and hide heaped in a corner; the MAYOR falls flat on his face. The Dragon-sound subsiding, the COUNCILLORS make as if to return, but cower again when the noise begins again. The Dragon sound passes away at last and the COUNCILLORS come together, but the MAYOR remains flat on the ground.)

FIRST COUNCILLOR (*addresses him*)

Most valiant Mayor, we know, we know
Quite well, what disconcerts you so.

We know your worship contemplates
Not your own peril, but the State's.

Nevertheless, your office high

Demands a loftier — dignity

(*vain effort to raise MAYOR*).

This trembling form, this whitened face
Might quite mislead the populace.

To common minds, your worship here

Might seem a prey to common fear.

(*Distant music is heard.*

Listen, besides — the fifes! the drums!

It is His Majesty who comes —

What if he made the same mistake!

Get up, get up, for goodness' sake!

(*The four COUNCILLORS raise him and set him on his feet. Music approaching.*)

ROYAL MARCH CHORUS

Room there! Room there!

Make a way to pass between —

Room there! Room there!

For the guards in green.

Bow you all as people loyal,

Bow you in the presence royal.

Room there! Room there!

For the King and Queen!

(*Repeat as much as is necessary until there have entered BAND, GUARDS, KING, QUEEN, UNA, LADIES. They march round in pomp, ending up with group in which the MAYOR and COUNCILLORS*

face KING. COURT *behind*, the COUNCILLORS *urge*
the MAYOR *forward*.)

KING (*very graciously*)

Wherefore our audience do ye seek,
Most loyal subjects?

FIRST COUNCILLOR
Speak!

SECOND COUNCILLOR
Speak!

THIRD COUNCILLOR
Speak!

(*The MAYOR is unable to do so. An awkward pause is
broken by singing dispersedly.*)

The mayor of this historic Borough
Without delay must tell the King
He must be brave and prompt and thorough,
We've had enough of paltering.
Now let him strike a royal blow,
Let him be brave and prompt and thorough,
Now let him lay the Dragon low,
Let it be now and not tomorrow.
Something the King must do — but oh —
What that may be we hardly know.

(*The DRAGON-sound is heard again; this time the
thunder of his wings is followed by a roar and then
a scream. Shrieks of "Mercy!" "Mercy, Mr.
Dragon," etc., etc., die away; the roar also subsides.
Meanwhile the scene has been in the wildest confusion
of alarums and excursions. Upon order being
restored, the WORKINGMAN pushes forward to address
the KING.*)

WORKINGMAN

Wot means them wild and 'orrid cries?
That voice! 'is voice! I recognize —
It 's our old Bill — my 'eart runs cold —
My mate since we was five year old.
So lovin' and so mild was 'e
'E would n't 'urt a bumblebee —
And 'im so suddin took awye
The same as Joe were yesterdye —
Honly ter think, yer Majesty,
Ter-morrer as it might be me!
Yer Majesty, we do himplore

(The WORKINGMAN kneels with clasped hands)

As you 'll protec' the suffrin' pore!

THE KING *(waving him aside haughtily)*

Peace, fellow, peace. And you, give ear,
Sir Mayor, and all our people here;
Give ear and you shall understand
Our only hope to save the land —
See how our royal consort grieves —

(QUEEN hides her face.)

(To PEOPLE)

You 'll need your pocket handkerchieves.
The Dragon — he who knows no pity —
Has promised now to leave the city
And cease for evermore from slaughter,
If he may *eat* our *only daughter*.
That is the offer of our foe —
And Una 's ready. She will go.
Oh, we *are* brave and prompt and thorough;
She goes to-day and not to-morrow.

QUEEN (*very tearfully*)

All through the dreary night I lay,
 And felt the minutes crawl away
 From black midnight to morning gray;
 For how could any mother sleep
 That had such cause to wake and weep?
 I wondered, "Must it come to pass?"
 And "Must I lose my little lass?"
 And still I wondered, "Is there none
 Could save for us our precious one?"
 (*tearfully embracing the PRINCESS UNA*)

THE KING

No. There is none. Unless we might
 Find out a perfect-hearted knight
 To try where others tried in vain,
 And slay where all the rest *were* slain.
 There 's such a hero, people say,
 Far off in Cappadocià,
 But no one else except Saint George
 Would dare go near that mountain gorge;
 And he 's too far to hear our call.
 There is no hope — no hope at all.
 (*Exeunt to Royal March in minor. There remain on
 the stage in front, UNA guarded by two HALBERDIERS,
 and LADIES of the court behind.*)

UNA and CHORUS OF LADIES

UNA

What think ye of Princesses,
 Oh ye happy village girls?
 They go in silken dresses,
 And in strings of shining pearls.
 And her maidens twenty do wait

On a Princess early and late,
Spoiled child is she of fate.

ALL (*sing*)

And her maidens twenty, *etc.*

(*During the singing of the Chorus, Una's crown, veil, mantle, and pearl necklace are removed by the LADIES, and her hands are bound by the GUARDS. The music, if necessary, repeats the chorus-air until these changes are complete.*)

UNA (*singing*)

I've scarcely got a rag on —

They have bound me hand to hand —

My doom — to face the Dragon

As the price of all the land.

They will leave me up in the glen,

Far away from the houses of men,

To tremble at his den.

LADIES

They will leave her up in the glen, *etc.*

UNA

Oh, sisters, will ye love me

If I go to die for you,

And pray the stars above me

That they keep me brave and true —

When I wait there weeping alone

To be eaten every bone,

My little life all done?

LADIES

While she waits there, *etc.*

(*During the singing of this chorus the GUARDS lead UNA away.*)

LADIES (*sing*)

Go tell it through the city
 And in all the countryside,
 With tears of loving pity
 Or with tears of loving pride.
 They shall hear in ages to be
 And in islands over the sea
 How brave, how fair, was she. } (*twice*)

(*Music of Royal March in minor or music of above.*
Exeunt LADIES bearing Una's royal robes.)

SCENE II

Enter the GREEN GUARDS with chairs and cushions to make a court for the KING, etc. Music in major of Royal March from time to time. After preparations, the tallest of the guards makes an "awkward squad" of the guards and band. "Guards in Green fall in," "Dress," "number," "left turn," "January, February, March!" Wheel around stage — (comedy to taste.) Marches them into position to head procession of the Court, etc., who enter to the Royal March, now in minor. They take their places. KING and QUEEN on their thrones as far as possible from entrance, the MEN standing behind, the LADIES grouped on the floor round end in front.

SONG OF THE LADIES

LADIES (*sing*)

Oh, where is now our lady —
 The Lady Una dear?
 Does she stay beneath the cedars,
 Does she linger by the mere;

To feed her brave peacocks
That sun their hundred eyes,
Or to feed her golden fishes
Where the water lily lies?
She feeds no golden fishes,
Nor peacocks on the green;
But she feeds the foulest Dragon
That ever yet was seen.

Oh, shame be on ye, Princes,
And shame on all your pride!
Had ye been worthy of her
The Lady had not died.
But dead is the lady
The daughter of the King,
And mournful is our music
And dolefully we sing.
But had the knight come hither,
Saint George from far away,
The noble Lady Una
Were safe and sound to-day!

*(They all dissolve in tears. After a pause of sobs, the
KING rises and makes the following decree:)*

KING

If any person's seen to smile
Nearer this house than half a mile,
Or if any person's heard to laugh
Nearer this house than a mile-and-a-half —
Be it known to all — we do decree —
He shall de-cap-i-tated be.

(Seats himself, in grief.)

*(Meanwhile the Jester has appeared. The JESTER
advances and hums to himself. He goes round*

peeping into the faces of the courtiers, etc., and fooling with his bauble-bladder.)

KING (*in anger*)

What means this knave, against our known commands,
Even in the house of mourning here to sing?

JESTER (*unabashed*)

If any one's found without a smile
Nearer this house than half a mile —
Or if any one comes with a sulky face
Within a mile-and-a-half of the place —
Then I, the Jester, do decree
He shall be tickled terriblee.

KING

Behead him this instant!

Ye heard what we said of him.

Away with the Jester,

And bring me the head of him.

(*Two of the GUARDS proceed to remove the JESTER.*)

GUARDS (*singing*)

Now, Mr. Jester,

You heard what he said,

“Away with the Jester,

And chop off his head!”

(*As they reach the door, the JESTER turns back his face, appealing to the KING.*)

JESTER

Will you chop off my head, sir —

But how if I died of it?

And there is such a *very*

Good riddle inside of it!

KING

A riddle?

JESTER

Yes, my lord King.

Set me safe in the middle
And I'll make you all busy
A-guessing my riddle.

KING (*to the GUARDS*)

Guards! bring him back. (*They do so. — To the JESTER*)

You are permitted to ask us this riddle.

SONG: JESTER'S RIDDLE

When feet are heavy and hearts are down,
And all uphill is the way to town,
Beside his cart walks Carter Will
Laboring up — up — up — the hill.

But when he is come to the top of the hill,
Oh! into his cart jumps Carter Will.
And down and away he hurries his nag on,
And *is n't* he safe if he's gotten the drag on?

KING

A riddle!

"And *is n't* he safe if he's gotten the drag on?" a riddle!
Be silent while we ponder. (*He ponders. Then irritably*)
You ponder too! (*COURT also ponders.*)

KING (*muttering*)

"Gotten the drag on" — "the drag on" — "drag on" —
Lah! "DRAG-ON," "DRAGON"! I have it!
Something has happened to our enemy —
Drag-on, Dragon; see you? (*to the COURT*)
Mark you, We saw it first;

Drag on, Dragon, yes ! You may smile now.

(The COURT smiles.)

Something hath happened to the Dragon — but what?

FIRST LADY

It may be in the night the Dragon's died,
The Princess having disagreed with him.

JESTER

As I stood on the tower they fly the big flag on,
I was gazing and gazing away for the Dragon;
I saw Princess Una sit under a crag on
The hillside, alone and awaiting the Dragon.
Then saw I a sight that is something to brag on,
For there rode up a knight for a fight with the Dragon.
And, oh, sir, the knight was a perfect paràgon,
He flashed in the light and he flew at the Dragon,
And fierce was the fight — but he's done for the Dragon;
And he's bringing him home — I expect in a wagon —
And now with your leave, sir, I'll empty a flagon,
For I'm thirsty with thinking of rhymes for the Dragon.

(One of the GUARDS hands a goblet.)

Here's your very good health, sir, and down with the
Dragon!

*(JESTER hands goblet to the KING, King to QUEEN, etc.,
as much as is necessary, while GREEN GUARDS get
out of the way, chairs are pushed into corner, and
KING, QUEEN, JESTER, etc., get into places to dance
round stage, singing.)*

Oh come away the while they play

A merry morris tune-a,

Joyfully and joyfully

A merry morris tune-a.

The maidens all advance —
To do the lady honor,
Modestly and modestly
To do the lady honor.
The men and boys with mighty noise
Do greet the lady Una,
Loyally and loyally,
Do greet the lady Una.

Oh, well the knight hath fought our fight,
The ugly Dragon cowers,
Woundedly and woundedly
The ugly Dragon cowers;
The maidens all advance —
A-throwing pretty flowers,
Daintily and daintily
A-throwing pretty flowers.
The boys and men do shout again
From all the walls and towers,
Lustily and lustily
From all the walls and towers.
(*Exeunt, dancing.*)

SCENE III

Music (perhaps) still playing "Morris Off." Enter first the JESTER, who takes audience into his confidence, and lies in waiting for the MAYOR, whom he trips up. The MAYOR falls heavily and is picked up by anxious COUNCILLORS and LADIES, who smooth his knees and make scolding gestures at the JESTER. One of the COUNCILLORS may say —

"Whoa! Mayor!"

The limping MAYOR and the COURT, and last, the KING, QUEEN, and GUARDS enter and group away

from the entrance, facing it. Presently SAINT GEORGE appears with UNA; she is leading the wounded DRAGON by a thread.

PEOPLE (*sing*)

CHORUS OF CITIZENS

Sóldier, saínt, pítiful as éver,
 As the light are you cóme to the glóom of our dáy.
 We have waitéd for yóu all the cíty a-shíver
 Like áspen leaves that dánce where the wínd is at pláy;
 Like deér that in a wóod start and quíver for dánger,
 When hórns are blówn and the hóunds are at hánd,
 And the peóple did práy, "May Gód provide a stránger,
 For all hópe and all fáith have forsáken the lánd."
 At dáwn we wished another dáy gone,
 Bedward at éve we crépt in féar,
 In sleép we did dreám he was néar
 Until you cáme and sléw the Drágon,
 Until you cáme and sléw the Drágon.

(In the centre at the back stand KING, QUEEN, etc.; to their right MAYOR and the CORPORATION. The MAYOR is now encouraged to address SAINT GEORGE, and, prompted by the FIRST COUNCILLOR, makes the following remarks)

MAYOR

My Lord King, Ladies, and Gentlemen — (*a pause*)
 unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, I think — I
 think I should be failing in my duty to-day, if I were to
 say nothing —

(Proceeds to do so until the FIRST COUNCILLOR prompts him)

FIRST COUNCILLOR (*prompting*)

I am very happy —

MAYOR (*lugubriously*)

“I am very happy.”

FIRST COUNCILLOR

Very happy indeed —

MAYOR (*still more lugubriously*)

“Very happy indeed.”

FIRST COUNCILLOR

I am very happy to see you all — stupid !

MAYOR

“I am very happy to see you all stupid.”

WORKINGMAN (*pushes forward*)

The truth is, sir, wot 'e 's a-tryin' ter say is this 'ere.
'E 's a-trying — honly 'e carn't a-get it art — 'e 's a-trying
to horfer yer the libbuty of this 'ere tarn.

KING (*to WORKINGMAN*)

Peace, fellow, peace !

(*To SAINT GEORGE*)

He offers thee the liberty
Of our most ancient city,
And we beside could find a bride
Considered rather pretty,
If you 'll settle down in our old town,
The town which you did pity.

MAYOR

Proposed and seconded, Sir Knight, and passed by our
committee —

ALL THE PEOPLE

Let him have both !

Let him have both ! our liberty — and our Princess.

SAINT GEORGE

Your liberty? Your Princess?

Oh, men, how ill the words become you!

Have you not surrendered both?

Your liberty? Ye were slaves!

Your Princess? She was deserted!

For your liberty, — it is won for you again, — then quit you like men and guard it well. Be loyal and be free. And for your Princess — let the women lead her away (*LADIES attend PRINCESS UNA off the stage, SAINT GEORGE addressing them*) and clothe her fittingly. Make her forget her tears, robe her as your Princess, and bring her here again — quickly — if it please you — quickly.

(The DRAGON is then brought forward round the stage.

The JESTER or one of the smallest GUARDS is mounted on his back, as he drags himself heavily along. The people crowd round him until from within is heard a low groan, and his frame is shaken by a convulsive shudder. All except SAINT GEORGE at once withdraw. Another groan is heard in the fore part of the DRAGON.)

THE WORKINGMAN (*comes forward, and in a lamentable voice exclaims*). 'Is voice oncet more? Did I not 'ear 'im?

(Kneeling earnestly before the DRAGON)

Bill! Dear ole Bill! Is you in there? (*Another groan within*)

(The other end of the DRAGON now groans in a similar manner.)

THE WORKINGMAN. Why! blessed if that ain't Joe!

(With SAINT GEORGE'S assistance the DRAGON is ripped up, and BILL and JOE emerge. They are appropriately welcomed by their mate.)

KING. And now, Sir Knight, we beg that you will tell us of your battle.

SAINT GEORGE (*sings*).

Oh, heard ye here his yell of fear, as home my spear
Went thrusting red?

By grace of God, my foot hath trod

Upon the Dragon's head;

For the lids close-sealèd

No more shall rise from off his eyes;

Shattered is his iron strength;

Limp he lieth all his length;

And in praise I kneeled

Beside my silver shield

And cross of mystic red.

Now shall ye be a people free — your enemy

Is captive led,

Now gapeth wide his cloven side

And bruised is his head.

CHORUS. Now shall we be a people free, our enemy, *etc.*

Along the heath now vanisheth his smoky breath

Like mists of morn,

His scale on scale of lustrous mail

Is all asunder torn —

And his wing outspread, its shadow dread

No more shall fling,

While ye shrink with faces white

At the glooming of his flight;

And a child may scorn,

May scorn his threatening,

He lieth so forlorn —

CHORUS. Now shall ye be a people free, *etc.*

The PRINCESS UNA is brought in, clothed in fair apparel. The KING and QUEEN receive her. They offer her hand to SAINT GEORGE, who -- unless the actor and actress dislike the process too much -- should kneel and kiss her hand. The actors then form themselves, while the music begins, into pairs, march and sing round the stage, and ranging themselves in two rows join hands -- boys and girls -- across.

The couples, beginning farthest from entrance, pass out under the joined hands, until all have made their exit. All this to take place during music and singing of the following words:

CHORUS OF CITIZENS

Lead him in triumph, O ye people,
 Music and garlands all the way;
 Loud be the bells in every steeple,
 Broad be his banner flung to-day.
 Hath he not saved both town and people?
 Hath he not dared the Worm to slay?
 Noble Saint George!
 Noble Saint George!
 Lead him in triumph, oh ye people,
 Lead ye the victor on his way!

Yet is there one shall share his honor,
 Frailer is she and yet as true,
 Petals of roses shower upon her,
 Fair as a rose is she to view.
 Let her be led in equal honor —
 Was she not ready to die for you?

Una the maid !

Una the maid !

Let her be led in equal honor,
Hath she not faced the Dragon too?

[CURTAIN]

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA ¹

Founded on Oscar Wilde's Story

Dramatized by
STUART WALKER

CHARACTERS

THE INFANTA OF SPAIN
THE DUCHESS OF ALBUQUERQUE
THE COUNT OF TIERRA-NUEVA
THE CHAMBERLAIN
THE FANTASTIC
A MOORISH ATTENDANT
ANOTHER PAGE

SCENE: *The royal balcony overlooking a garden.*

TIME: *The sixteenth century.*

The opening of the curtains discloses a balcony overlooking a garden. The grim stone arch frames a brilliant sky. Gay flowers and a few white roses cover the railing. A bit of gaudy awning, which can be lowered over the arch, flutters in the breeze. At the right is a large mirror, so draped that the dull, black hangings can be lowered to cover the mirror entirely. The hangings are of velvet,

¹ From *Portmanteau Adaptations*, published by Stewart and Kidd Company, copyright 1921, all rights reserved. Permission to produce this play must be obtained from Mr. Stuart Walker, 304 Carnegie Hall, New York City.

powdered with suns and stars. At the left similar hangings adorn a doorway. There are rich floor-coverings and several formal chairs.

A MOORISH ATTENDANT in black and yellow livery enters and arranges the chairs, and stands at attention.

The INFANTA enters, followed by the DUCHESS OF ALBUQUERQUE. The Infanta is dressed in gray brocade, very, very stiff and stately. She is small, with reddish hair and a settled air of self-possession and formality. Occasionally her eyes twinkle and her feet suggest her childishness, but she soon recovers herself under the watchful eye of the Camerera, and she never really forgets that she is the Infanta of Spain.

The INFANTA bows, if the slight inclination of her head can be called bowing, to the Moorish Attendant. The DUCHESS also inclines her head and stands in the doorway.

INFANTA. I would be alone.

DUCHESS. Your Highness —

INFANTA. I would be alone.

(The DUCHESS turns in the doorway and speaks to those behind her)

DUCHESS. Her Highness would be alone. *(Then to the INFANTA)* This is unheard of.

INFANTA. My birthday is rare enough to be almost unheard of, your Grace of Albuquerque. I would be alone on my birthday — and I'm going to be alone! *(Then to the ATTENDANT)* You may go! — But wait — *(She stands admiringly before the mirror.)* Hold back the curtain. *(The ATTENDANT lifts the curtain. She preens herself.)* Why do I not look so well in my own suite? See how wonderful this is here! Look at the gold in my hair!

DUCHESS. That is vanity, your Highness.

INFANTA. May I not admire myself on my birthday? Have I so many birthdays that I must live them as I live every other day?

DUCHESS. What is wickedness on other days is also wickedness on your birthday.

INFANTA (*taking a white rose from the balustrade and trying it in her hair and at her waist*) See — see — I like it here.

(*The DUCHESS, outraged, speaks to the ATTENDANT.*)

DUCHESS. You may go.

INFANTA. No, no — stay — draw the curtains across the mirror.

DUCHESS. What will your father say?

(*The INFANTA is quite beside her little self.*)

INFANTA. Draw the curtains across the mirror and hide me from myself, as those curtains hide my dead mother's room!

DUCHESS. Please —

INFANTA. I have spoken, your Grace. The curtains are to be drawn. We shall have no mirror to-day.

(*The ATTENDANT closes the curtain.*)

INFANTA. You may go!

(*The ATTENDANT exits.*)

(*The INFANTA goes to the balustrade and looks into the gardens below. The DUCHESS, quite at a loss what to do, finally crosses to the INFANTA.*)

DUCHESS. Your Highness, I am compelled to remonstrate with you. What will his Majesty, your father, say?

INFANTA. My father will say nothing. He does not seem to care.

DUCHESS. Oh — Oh — Oh —

INFANTA. And my uncle wishes that I were dead. No one cares. I have to be a queen all the time, and I can

never be a little girl like the little girl I saw in Valladolid. She just played — and no one corrected her every moment.

DUCHESS. You play with the finest dolls in the world.

INFANTA. But I do not have mud like hers!

DUCHESS. Mud!

INFANTA. I 'd like to smear my face!

DUCHESS. Oh!

INFANTA. And I 'd like to climb a tree!

DUCHESS. Oh, your Highness, you fill me with horror! You forget that you are the daughter of a king!

INFANTA. Well, it 's my birthday — and I 'm tired of being a wooden body.

(She seats herself most unmajestically on the footstool.)

DUCHESS. Such wickedness! I shall have to call the Grand Inquisitor. There is a devil in you!

INFANTA. Call him! I 'll rumple my hair at him.

DUCHESS. He 'll forbid you to enjoy your birthday.

INFANTA. What is it for, my birthday — the same old story?

DUCHESS *(mysteriously)*. Who knows?

INFANTA *(not so surely)*. When I was ten, they had dancing in the garden, but I could not go among the little girls. They played and I looked on.

DUCHESS. An Infanta of the house of Aragon must not play with children.

INFANTA. And when I was eleven they had dancing in the garden and a shaggy bear and some Barbary apes; but I could only sit here. I could n't touch the bear, even when he smiled at me. And when one of the apes climbed to this balustrade, you drew me away.

DUCHESS. Such animals are very dangerous, your Highness.

INFANTA. And here I am — twelve years old to-day — and still I must stay up here like a prisoner.

DUCHESS. Your Highness is very ill-tempered to-day.

INFANTA. I do not care. I do not want to be an Infanta.

DUCHESS. You are the daughter of Ferdinand, by grace of God, King of Spain!

INFANTA. Will my father come to me to-day? And will he smile?

DUCHESS. This is all for you alone.

INFANTA. Will not my sad father then come to me to-day? And will he not smile?

DUCHESS. He will see you after the surprise.

INFANTA. A surprise?

DUCHESS. Yes, your Highness.

INFANTA. What is it?

DUCHESS. I cannot tell.

INFANTA. If I guess?

DUCHESS. Perhaps.

INFANTA. It's hobby-horses!

DUCHESS. No. (*They almost forget their royalty.*)

INFANTA. It's an African juggler with two green and gold snakes in a red basket.

DUCHESS. No.

INFANTA. In a blue basket?

DUCHESS. No.

INFANTA (*ecstatically*). Three snakes?

DUCHESS. Not at all.

INFANTA (*dully*). Is it a sermon by the Grand Inquisitor?

DUCHESS. No.

INFANTA (*with new hope*). Is it a troupe of Egyptians with tambourines and zithers?

DUCHESS. No.

INFANTA. Is it something I've never seen before?

DUCHESS. Never in the palace.

INFANTA (*screaming*). It's a fantastic!

DUCHESS. Who knows?

INFANTA. Oh, it's a fantastic. It's a fantastic!

(*She dances about.*)

DUCHESS. Your Highness forgets herself.

INFANTA. It's a fantastic! It's a fantastic! (*She suddenly regains her poise.*) Where is my cousin, the Count of Tierra-Nueva? I shall tell him that I am to be entertained on my birthday by a fantastic. And I shall let him come here to see it.

(*The MOORISH ATTENDANT steps inside the door and holds the curtain aside.*)

INFANTA. Your Grace, inform the Chamberlain that I shall have the fantastic dance for me in my balcony. The sun in the garden hurts my eyes. Besides, I want to touch his back.

(*THE INFANTA goes out, every inch a queen.*)

DUCHESS. She has guessed. Tell the Chamberlain to send the fantastic here.

ATTENDANT. The fantastic is waiting in the antechamber, your Grace.

(*The DUCHESS exits after the Infanta.*)

(*The ATTENDANT crosses to antechamber.*)

ATTENDANT. Her Grace, the Duchess of Albuquerque, bids you enter. Inform the Chamberlain that her Highness, the Infanta, is ready for the dance. (*The FANTASTIC and an ATTENDANT enter. The Fantastic is a hunchback, with a huge mane of black hair and a bright face that shows no trace of beauty, but great light and wonder.*)

(*The FANTASTIC looks about the balcony. It is all so strange to him. As he goes about touching the things in the place the ATTENDANT follows him closely, watching him with eagle eyes. As the boy nears the mirror and lays his hand upon the black velvet*

hangings, the ATTENDANT steps in front of him and prevents his opening the curtains. The little boy then sits — a very small, misshapen little creature — on the steps of the balcony.)

(The CHAMBERLAIN enters. He is a middle-aged man, with some tenderness left in his somewhat immobile face, and when he addresses the little boy there is a note of pathos that is almost indefinable.)

CHAMBERLAIN. Little grotesque, you are to see the King's daughter!

FANTASTIC (*almost overcome*). Where is she?

CHAMBERLAIN. Come now, you must not be afraid.

FANTASTIC. I have never seen a king's daughter.

CHAMBERLAIN. You must smile.

FANTASTIC. Is she very big — and all bright and shiny?

CHAMBERLAIN. Smile! You did not have such a long face yesterday. That is why we bought you.

FANTASTIC. Will she smile upon me?

CHAMBERLAIN. You must make her smile.

FANTASTIC. Will she beat me if I do not make her smile?

CHAMBERLAIN. You shall be beaten if you displease her. This is her Highness's birthday. And you are to dance for her to make her happy.

FANTASTIC. I have never danced for a king's daughter before.

CHAMBERLAIN. You must dance bravely before her, as you danced when we found you in the woods yesterday.

FANTASTIC. I am afraid of the king's daughter.

CHAMBERLAIN. We cannot have fear on the Infanta's birthday. We must have happiness.

FANTASTIC. I wish my father had not sold me.

CHAMBERLAIN. Your father was very poor, and he wanted you to make the Infanta happy.

FANTASTIC. My father did not care for me.

CHAMBERLAIN. You shall make the Infanta happy.

FANTASTIC. If you had a son would you sell him?

CHAMBERLAIN. You were sold to the Infanta.

FANTASTIC. Have you a son?

CHAMBERLAIN. No.

FANTASTIC. My father had seven sons.

CHAMBERLAIN. I had a little boy once.

FANTASTIC. And did you sell him?

CHAMBERLAIN. No. He went away — he died.

FANTASTIC. Could he make the Infanta smile?

CHAMBERLAIN. I think he could.

FANTASTIC. Did he dance for her?

CHAMBERLAIN. No, he rode a hobby-horse in the mock bullfight.

FANTASTIC. What is a hobby-horse?

CHAMBERLAIN. A hobby-horse is a make-believe horse — like the stick that you ride through the woods.

FANTASTIC. Oh, can't I ride a hobby-horse in a bullfight?

CHAMBERLAIN. Sometime. If you will make the Infanta happy on her birthday I'll give you a hobby-horse.

FANTASTIC. Can I ride it to-day — for her?

CHAMBERLAIN. No. You'll have to dance for her.

FANTASTIC. Is she terrible?

CHAMBERLAIN. Not if you are good.

FANTASTIC. I think — I'm afraid.

CHAMBERLAIN. Afraid? You were not afraid of the woods.

FANTASTIC. They would not hurt me. I did not have to make them smile.

CHAMBERLAIN. What will you do when you see the Infanta?

FANTASTIC. I don't know. That man who dressed me up said I must smile and bow. My smile was very funny, he said, and my bow was funnier. I did n't try to be funny.

CHAMBERLAIN. Some boys are funny even when they don't try to be.

FANTASTIC. I don't feel funny. I just feel happy, and when I am happy people laugh — . Did she smile upon your son when he rode the hobby-horse?

CHAMBERLAIN. She threw a rose to him.

FANTASTIC. Do you think she'll throw a rose to me? I like roses — Am I like your son?

CHAMBERLAIN. My son was tall.

FANTASTIC. I would be tall and strong, too; but I broke my back, and my brothers say I am very crooked — I do not know — I am not as strong as they are, but I can dance and sometimes I sing, too — I make up my songs as I go along. And they are good songs, too, I know, because I've heard them.

CHAMBERLAIN. How did you hear them, Señor Merry-Face?

FANTASTIC. Someone sang them back to me.

CHAMBERLAIN. A little girl, perhaps?

FANTASTIC. Someone — When I sang in the valley she would mock me.

CHAMBERLAIN. Who was it? — Tell me.

FANTASTIC. It was Echo.

CHAMBERLAIN. Echo? And does she live near your house?

FANTASTIC. She lives in the hills — and sometimes she used to come into the woods when it was very still.

CHAMBERLAIN. Did you ever see Echo?

FANTASTIC. No. You can't see her — you can only hear her.

CHAMBERLAIN. Would you like to see her?

FANTASTIC. I always wonder if Echo might not mock my face as she mocks my voice?

CHAMBERLAIN. Who knows?

FANTASTIC. I go into the hills and I sing a song and then Echo sings back to me — just as I sing. But when I go into the woods Echo does n't stand in front of me — just as I look.

CHAMBERLAIN. Have n't you ever seen yourself?

FANTASTIC. No, but I should like to. I always make people happy when they look at me. They always laugh. Would I laugh if Echo mocked my face?

CHAMBERLAIN. I do not know.

FANTASTIC. Am I really happy-looking?

CHAMBERLAIN. You are a fantastic.

FANTASTIC. That sounds happy.

CHAMBERLAIN. I hope it always will be.

FANTASTIC. Have you ever seen yourself?

CHAMBERLAIN. Yes.

FANTASTIC. Did your son see himself?

CHAMBERLAIN. Yes.

FANTASTIC. Where?

CHAMBERLAIN. In a mirror.

FANTASTIC. Is that Echo's other name?

CHAMBERLAIN. Yes.

FANTASTIC. Can I see myself sometime?

CHAMBERLAIN. Yes.

FANTASTIC. I'll sing, too.

(The ATTENDANT enters.)

ATTENDANT. Her Royal Highness, the Infanta of Spain !

(The FANTASTIC is very much frightened.)

CHAMBERLAIN. Go behind the door there — Wait — Be brave — Smile — And do not speak until you are asked to.

(The INFANTA enters sedately, followed by the DUCHESS and the COUNT OF TIERRA-NUOVA, an unpleasant-looking boy of sixteen. The CHAMBERLAIN bows very low and kisses the INFANTA'S stiffly proffered hand.)

INFANTA *(regally)*. My lord Chamberlain, this is our royal birthday, and in accord with the wish of our father, the King of Spain, we are to be entertained with some mirthful sport *(suddenly a little girl)* — and I know what it is! It's a fantastic!

CHAMBERLAIN. Your Highness, it is the pleasure of the Chamberlain to His Majesty, your father, the King of Spain, to offer felicitations this day on which God has deigned to send happiness and good fortune to Spain in your royal person. His Majesty the King through me desired to surprise you with mirth this day.

INFANTA. Is our royal father well? And does he smile to-day?

CHAMBERLAIN. His Majesty does not smile, your Highness. He cannot smile in his great grief.

INFANTA. Let the surprise be brought to us. But I guessed what it was! — It must be very ugly and very crooked and very, very funny to look at — or we shall be highly displeased. *(She settles into her royal place and takes on a manner. The FANTASTIC, having been summoned by the page, barely enters the door. The INFANTA, looking royally straight before her, does not turn her head.)*

INFANTA *(after a moment)*. Well?

CHAMBERLAIN. Here is the surprise, your Highness.

(The FANTASTIC is the picture of grotesque misery. He looks first at the CHAMBERLAIN and then at the

INFANTA. *Finally she turns to him, and he tries a timid smile and an awkward bow. The INFANTA claps her little hands and laughs in sheer delight. The FANTASTIC looks desperately at the CHAMBERLAIN.)*

INFANTA. Go on — Is n't he funny!

CHAMBERLAIN (*to FANTASTIC*). Bow again and then begin to dance.

FANTASTIC (*joyfully*). She is only a little girl, and I've made her happy!

CHAMBERLAIN. What will you dance, Señor Merry-Face?

FANTASTIC. I'll dance the one I made up — and no one ever saw or heard it except Echo. It's the dance of the autumn leaf. I'll show you what the autumn leaves do and I'll tell you what they say.

INFANTA. How do you know, you comic little beast?

FANTASTIC. I know because I live in the woods, up in the hills, and I dance with the leaves — and I have two pet wood-pigeons.

INFANTA. Where is the music?

FANTASTIC. I sing — it's happier that way.

INFANTA. Dance! Dance!

(The FANTASTIC bows in an absurdly grotesque way — his idea of stateliness and grace.)

INFANTA. I've never seen such a monstrous fantastic.

COUNT. We must touch his back before he goes — for good luck.

(The FANTASTIC begins to sing and dance The Song of the Autumn Leaf.)

FANTASTIC (*singing*).

All summer long
I cling to the tree,
Merrily, merrily!

The winds play and play,
But I cling to the tree,
Merrily, merrily!

The summer sun
Is hot and gold,
Cheerily, cheerily.
But I hang on
In the August heat,
Wearily, wearily!
I am not free,
For I have to hang
Wearily, wearily!
Until autumn frosts
Release my grasp,
Cheerily, cheerily!

Then I 'm free,
All crumpled and brown
Merrily, merrily!
I roll and I blow
Up and around,
Merrily, merrily!
All crumpled and brown
In my autumn coat,
I dance in the wind,
I hide in the rain,
Dancing and blowing
And waiting for winter,

Cheerily, cheerily,
Merrily, merrily,
Wearily, wearily.

(He falls like a dead leaf on to the floor. The INFANTA is delighted.)

INFANTA. I 'm going to throw him a rose!

DUCHESS. Your Highness!

INFANTA. See — like the court ladies to Caffarelli, the treble.

(The FANTASTIC has risen and bowed in his grotesque way. The INFANTA tosses the rose to him. He takes it up and, bowing absurdly, presses it to his lips.)

DUCHESS *(who has never smiled)*. Your Highness, you must prepare for your birthday feast.

INFANTA. Oh, let him dance again! The same dance!

DUCHESS. Think of the birthday feast, your Highness. Your father, the King of Spain; your uncle, the Grand Inquisitor; the noble children.

INFANTA. Once more!

DUCHESS. Your Highness, you must see the huge birthday cake with your initials on it in painted sugar — and a silver flag —

INFANTA. Very well. He can dance again after my siesta. — My cousin, I trust that you will see the next dance.

COUNT. I'll ride a hobby-horse and he'll be the bull. It will be very funny with such a funny bull.

(He kisses her hand and exits the opposite way. The INFANTA, followed by the DUCHESS, exits, and as she goes she looks once more at the Fantastic and breaks into a laugh. The FANTASTIC is delighted and stands looking after her.)

CHAMBERLAIN. Come!

FANTASTIC *(putting out his hand)*. I think she liked me.

CHAMBERLAIN. The Infanta of Spain is the daughter of the King of Spain. You have made her smile. Come!

(They go out. The ATTENDANT crosses and closes the awning. He draws the curtains from the mirror and preens himself a bit, looking now and then until he disappears. A sunbeam, coming through the fluttering awning, strikes the mirror and reflects on the tessellated floor. There is a short intermezzo. Far-away harps and violins echo the FANTASTIC'S little song. The FANTASTIC enters furtively, looking about. He takes the rose from his bosom.)

FANTASTIC. I think I'll ask her to come away with me when I've finished my dance.

(He crosses to her door and listens. Then smiles and skips a step or two. He sees the sunbeam through the awning and goes to it. He again takes the rose from his coat and holds it in the sunlight. Again he dances to the door and listens, then he turns, facing the mirror for the first time. He breaks into a smile, but first hides the rose hastily. He waves his hand.)

FANTASTIC. Good-morrow! — You are very funny! — You are very crooked! — Don't look that way! —

Why do you frown at me? — Can't you talk? — You only move your lips. — Oh, you funny little boy!

(He puts his hands on his sides and breaks into a great laugh.)

FANTASTIC. If you could see yourself, you'd laugh still more.

(He makes a mocking bow and breaks into shouts. He plays before the mirror. The mockery is too clever.)

FANTASTIC. You mock me, you little beast! — Stop it! Speak to me — You make me afraid — Like night in the forest.

(He has never known anything like this. He is in turn enraged, terrified. He runs forward and puts out his hand. He rubs his hand over the face of the mirror and the cold, hard surface mystifies him. He brushes the hair from his eyes. He makes faces. He retreats. He looks about the room. He sees everything repeated in the mirror — the awning, the chairs, the sunbeam on the floor.)

FANTASTIC *(calling)*. Echo!

(He strains for an answer. He hides behind a chair. He makes a plan.)

FANTASTIC. I know, miserable little monster. You sha'n't mock me.

(He takes the rose from his coat.)

FANTASTIC. She gave me this rose. It is the only one in the world — She gave it to me — to me.

(He emerges from behind the chair and holds out the rose. With a dry sob he shrinks away and, fascinated, stares at the mirror. He compares the rose, petal by petal, terror and rage rising in him. He kisses it and presses it to his heart. Suddenly he rushes to the mirror with a cry. He touches the glass

again, then with a cry of despair he hurls himself sobbing on the floor. Once more he looks upon the picture and then, covering his face with his hands, he crawls away like a wounded animal, lies moaning in the shadow and beating the ground with his impotent hands. The INFANTA enters, followed by the COUNT. At the sight of the FANTASTIC the INFANTA stops and breaks into a laugh.)

INFANTA. His dancing was funny, but his acting is funnier still. Indeed he is almost as good as the puppets.

(His sobs grow fainter and fainter. He drags himself toward the door, trying to hide his face. Then with a sudden gasp he clutches his side and falls back across the step and lies quite still. The INFANTA waits a moment.)

INFANTA. That is capital; it would make even my father, the King of Spain, smile. But now you must dance for me:—

Cheerily, cheerily!
Merrily, merrily!
Wearily, wearily!

COUNT. Yes, you must get up and dance and then we 'll have a bullfight and I 'll kill you.

(The FANTASTIC does not answer.)

INFANTA *(stamping her foot)*. My funny little fantastic is sulking. You must wake him up and tell him to dance for me.

COUNT. You must dance, little monster, you must dance. The Infanta of Spain and the Indies wishes to be amused. *(Then to a PAGE)* A whipping master should be sent for. *(The PAGE goes out.)*

COUNT. Let's touch his back *(as the children touch his hump)* and make a wish.

INFANTA. I *wish* he would dance.

(*Enter the CHAMBERLAIN and the DUCHESS.*)

DUCHESS. Your Highness !

INFANTA. Make him dance, or I shall have him flogged.

(*The CHAMBERLAIN rushes to the body. He kneels.*

Feels the heart — sees the sunbeam and the exposed mirror — shrugs his shoulders — rises.)

CHAMBERLAIN. Mi bella Princess, your funny little fantastic will never dance again.

INFANTA (*laughing*). But why will he not dance again ?

CHAMBERLAIN. Because his heart is broken.

INFANTA (*thinks a moment, then frowns*). For the future let those who come to play with me have no hearts.

(*She passes out, not deigning to look back, every inch the queen — the disappointed, lonely, shut-in little queen. The others follow her properly according to rank; but the CHAMBERLAIN, remembering a little boy who would ride hobby-horses no more in mock bullfights, returns and throws the Infanta's mantilla over the little warped body. It is a moment of glory. The CHAMBERLAIN again starts to follow his mistress; but memory is stronger than etiquette. He goes to the FANTASTIC and takes up the little hand which clutches something precious. He opens the fingers and finds the rose. He holds it out and lets the petals flutter to the floor. That is all.*)

[CURTAIN]

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST¹

CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

CHARACTERS

ROSAMUND

GEOFFREY

HAROLD

ELINOR

FRANCES

DAME MARGARET

A BEGGAR

THE SPIRIT OF YULE

In order to give a sixteenth-century appearance to the school-room production, at each end of the space which forms the stage, and part way across, place screens. Over the screens hang portieres or curtains of some solid color — dark green, crimson, Italian blue. These screens are so placed as to give the necessary number of exits and entrances, namely, the door in centre background, and one at right and left. Against the background, or wall, hang a curtain of some material closely resembling flowered damask. This, when lifted with an air of looking out, will stand in lieu of a window. White splotches of chalk on the blackboard over which this curtain is hung will give the effect of a snowy night outside when the curtain is lifted. If “mission furni-

¹ Reprinted from *The House of the Heart and Other Plays for Children*, by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

ture" is not procurable, drape the school chairs with curtains to give a sixteenth-century effect. The fireplace mentioned in the directions can be done without; though one can be made of four good-sized dry-goods boxes from which the covers have been removed. Nail two of them together, and place a board across the top, one end resting on them, and the other on the other two. Paint or chalk them red, leaving white lines in squares, as if it were built of bricks. Or paste red tissue-paper all over it, cut in brick shapes. Smudge it a little with charcoal to give it the effect of sootiness and long use. Have a pair of andirons, made of cardboard wired and painted black, and beneath them embers of red paper and black coal. On the curtains which drape the screens, and against any of the wall space that remains, hang as many pine and holly wreaths as possible. Have candles burning here and there to show it is the close of day.

If more ornate costumes are not procurable, the everyday dresses of the children can be changed thus: White cheesecloth draperies for the SPIRIT OF YULE, chaplet of real or artificial holly. Each child should be provided with two yards and a half of either cheesecloth or cambric. For the girls' costumes, cut out a square in the centre of the cheesecloth and slip it over their heads. The long, straight pieces that will thus hang back and front will be exactly the lines of costume worn in the sixteenth century. The neck can be ornamented with lace or gold embroidery. For the boys, if hose and doublet cannot be had, cheesecloth cut in the same fashion, only much shorter, coming above the knee so as to form a kind of tunic. These tunics should be belted in at the waist with loose girdles of leather or cord. For ELINOR, pale blue. For FRANCES, pale yellow. For

DAME MARGARET, *an everyday long dress with a white cap and kerchief. For GEOFFREY, dark purple. For HAROLD, dark green. For the BEGGAR, a long tattered hood and cloak of some dark color, gray or brown.*

If the play is given on a miniature stage, care should be taken about the lighting of the scene. From the time when the children blow out the candles the room should grow darker and darker. Then, when FRANCES discovers that the beggar was indeed the angel, a brilliant shaft of light should strike full into the darkened room.

THE SPIRIT OF YULE *stands before the curtain and delivers the Prologue*

Lordings and Ladies gathered here
To have your fill of Christmas cheer,
Give ear, I pray you, heedfully
Unto such things as here shall be.
Short is our play and scant of wit,
Yet I beseech you, follow it
And take the kernel of its truth.
As for the players — let their youth
Condone their faults. Your patience lend,
And if ye find aught to commend
In this our play, we are repaid
For all the striving we have made.
Now shall the curtain slowly rise,
Displaying to our waiting eyes
The play's beginning. Let it be
Heard to the end with courtesy.

THE SCENE *of the play is the hall of a sixteenth-century house of people of quality. At the right, a fireplace with huge logs aglow. The chimney shelf is banked with Christmas greens. By the hearth, facing the audience, a splendidly*

carved high-backed chair. Near it a footstool. There are a number of candles burning on the chimney shelf. In the right background a door opening on the vista of a white wintry twilight that is nearing its close. In the left background a window with crimson damask curtains reaching to the floor. At the left, back, a door opening into another room of the house. On the left wall, skins, swords, and deer horns. Running along the lower part of the wall, a long carved bench. On it, tumbled heaps of Christmas gifts and bunches of holly and mistletoe.

At the rise of the curtain DAME MARGARET is seated by the fire, embroidering. She is small and ruddy. Her hair is almost white, but her face is unlined.

Near the centre of the room there is a table (mission style): on it, a plate, cup, and flagon, Christmas cakes, and burning candles. At the left the children stand in a group, holding their presents in their hands, — notably, a fur-lined hood, a pouch-purse, fur-lined shoes, — while ROSAMUND is trying on a brocaded fur-lined cloak that falls in heavy folds to the floor, calling on the others to admire it.

ROSAMUND

Doth it not look most fairly, Frances?

FRANCES

Nay,

I'm weary of thy cloak. Put it away.
 Ever since morn we've talked of naught but gifts;
 Now, while the north wind drives the snow in drifts,
 It is the hour for tales and legends old,
 For rhymes of saints, or of crusaders bold,
 Of kings and heroes and angelic choir.
 Come, let us gather close about the fire,

And quench the candles, till we make the room
A place of dancing shadows — gleam and gloom.

(ROSAMUND and GEOFFREY blow out candles.)

Draw fast the curtains. Let the Yule log's light
Be our one festal flame this Christmas night!

(to HAROLD)

What dost thou see?

HAROLD

(*who has gone to draw the curtains, pauses there,
looking out.*)

I see the roadway go
Past frosty hedge and meadow white with snow,
Where nothing stirs, save wintry boughs tossed high
Against the bleakness of the bitter sky.

ROSAMUND

(*gayly*)

Come, leave the casement. What have we to do
With winter's humors? Here are wreaths of yew
And candlelight and our own hearthstone's glow —
So let the drifts heap high, and the wind blow!

HAROLD

Nay, for on foot to-night, storm-fagged and bent,
Their bodies hunger-torn, their raiment rent,
Who knows what beggars face the bitter wind!

GEOFFREY

Now Heaven grant that such may shelter find,
And peace and cheer.

FRANCES

Unto that wish, Amen!

ROSAMUND

(*As children follow her toward where DAME MARGARET
is sitting*)

Come, let us gather near the hearth and then
Perchance we'll ask Dame Margaret for a tale!

DAME MARGARET

A tale, dear hearts? Hark! How the wind doth wail!
It seems to twist the branches of each tree
And wring from them a cry of agony.

GEOFFREY

I'll warrant none will stir abroad *this* night.

DAME MARGARET

Save one, my son, who speeds on wings of light!

GEOFFREY

(*amazed*)

On wings of light —

DAME MARGARET

Aye, for the legends say
That ever on the close of Christmas day,
When folk are tired of feasting and of mirth,
The Christmas Angel comes again to earth,
Chooses a house, and knocks upon its door —

ELINOR

(*wide-eyed*)

Why, thou hast never told *this* tale before!

DAME MARGARET

And then —

A WOMAN'S VOICE

(*calling from beyond the door at left*)

Good Dame!

DAME MARGARET

(rising)

It is thy mother's call.

(raises voice.)

Coming, my lady!

(Exits hurriedly, left.)

ROSAMUND

(still gazing dreamily into fire)

What if to this hall

The wondrous shining Christmas Angel came,
All clothed in white, with wings like to a flame,
Knocked on our door and —

ELINOR

Oh, I quake with fear!

Thou dost not think an angel will come *here*?

ROSAMUND

(her arm about her)

Why tremblest thou?

ELINOR

(shamefacedly)

I'd not know what to say

Unto an angel — if one chanced to stay!

FRANCES

(wisely)

Say? Sooth, it is the time of deed, not word.
It is the birthday of our gracious Lord,
So to the angel we would give our best —
The gifts we cherish above all the rest.

(They go to the bench, left, taking up the gifts as they speak.)

ROSAMUND

Then I would give my cloak of glorious hues.

ELINOR

And I my hood!

HAROLD

And I my fur-lined shoes!

GEOFFREY

And I my purse!

FRANCES

And I —

(a knock on the door without)

HAROLD

(in an awed voice)

Someone is there!

Open the door!

ROSAMUND

Nay, nay, I do not dare!

. ELINOR

(fearfully)

If it should be the Angel!

ROSAMUND

(commandingly)

Open, straight!

Ye know full well an angel should not wait.

ELINOR

Hark! How the wind wails! And the fire burns low.
I am afraid.

FRANCES

Stay, thou, and I will go.

(The children stand together, silent and half fearful, while Frances crosses to the door and opens it. On the threshold appears an old BEGGAR, tattered and forlorn, yet in spite of flapping rags wearing a strangely regal aspect.)

THE BEGGAR

(extending palm)

Hast thou an alms to give on Christmas night?

GEOFFREY

(aside to the others, intensely relieved)

Nay, 't is no angel clothed in robes of light,

'T is but a wandering beggar, lean and old.

FRANCES

(to beggar)

Come in and rest thee. It is bitter cold.

(BEGGAR crosses with her to chair by fire.)

And here are Christmas cakes, so eat and sup,

(Takes them from table, centre.)

And have thy fill.

(Hands flagon.)

THE BEGGAR

Sweet to the lips the cup

So freely given, for it warms the heart,

And to the soul true joyance doth impart.

ROSAMUND

(aside to Geoffrey)

That speech is passing strange. What means it?

GEOFFREY

(shaking his head, much mystified)

Nay,

I do not know!

ELINOR

(timidly, to BEGGAR)

Hast thou come far to-day?

THE BEGGAR

Aye, far! From a Far Country!

FRANCES

Wilt thou not

Let me refill thy cup?

(She and the BEGGAR talk in dumb show. The other children withdraw to the left and talk among themselves, with ever-straying glances toward the figure by the fire.)

ROSAMUND

(aside, soberly)

Bethink the lot

Of beggar-folk! While we are housed and warm
They fare forth cold and hungry through the storm.
The chill wind makes a mock of what they wear,
Their poor bones feel the keen and searching air;
Knuckles all blue with frost, and feet half shod,
Pierced by the stones and brambles they have trod.

HAROLD

While we have joys and comforts manifold
Are we not churls our bounty to withhold?

GEOFFREY

Come, then, and let us give, the while we may.

(They cross to BEGGAR, carrying gifts.)

GEOFFREY

(fastening shoes on BEGGAR'S feet)

Wilt thou not take from me on Christmas day
A little gift to smooth the roads ye tread?

HAROLD

(bestowing purse)

And this, perchance, will find for you a bed;
The highways are full dark and cold I know,
For those who journey friendless through the snow.

FRANCES

In sooth, why should you trudge the road again?
To share our peace and shelter we are fain.
Will you not linger while the Yule logs burn?

THE BEGGAR

Nay! To that country far I must return!

ELINOR

(shyly)

Well, then, I prithee wear this hood for me!

THE BEGGAR

(rising)

Now in the name of sweet Sainte Charitie
I give ye thanks!

ROSAMUND

(approaching)

And pleasure me to wear
This cloak to shield ye from the wintry air.

THE BEGGAR

It is a finer cloak than beggars use.

ROSAMUND

(eagerly)

But thou wilt not a Christmas gift refuse?
Wilt thou not take the gift as friend to friend?

(The BEGGAR looks at ROSAMUND a long moment and then bows head in assent. She slips the cloak about the BEGGAR'S shoulders.)

THE BEGGAR

Who giveth to the poor doth surely lend!

(Pauses at door, facing audience.)

In time to come may there be shown to ye
Such welcome as ye now have shown to me,
And when ye knock, the door be opened wide.

(Raises hand.)

Till then all Christmas peace and joy abide
Amongst ye always!

(Exit BEGGAR.)

FRANCES

(in a hushed voice)

As the beggar spoke
'T was like a benediction, and the cloak
Fell as in royal folds.

GEOFFREY

Oh, hast thou thought
That if the Angel comes we now have naught
To give in greeting?

(A sudden white radiance streams in from without, filling the darkened room.)

FRANCES

(at window, with a cry)

Look! There, where but now
The beggar stood, stands one about whose brow

Flashes a glory mystical and white.
Oh, 't was no beggar came to us to-night!

ROSAMUND

It was the Angel! And we did not know!

FRANCES

Grieve not. It was a miracle. For lo,
Humble and piteous and meanly dressed,
The Christmas Angel came to be our guest!

[CURTAIN]

EPILOGUE, *spoken by the* SPIRIT OF YULE

Lordings and Ladies, all is done,
And our short play its length has run.
For that ye heard it patiently,
We give most humble thanks to ye,
And bid ye think, at this glad time
Of wassail bowl and church bell's chime,
That there be those who lack for bread,
Who have not where to lay their head.
Forget not, when your hearthstones glow,
Those other hearths whose fires are low,
That, giving where the needy are,
Ye give to something higher far.
And now, good night! If, of your grace
Our play hath pleased you for a space,
Right glad we are, and well content,
And count our labors blithely spent,
And wish to ye, whate'er befall,
A Merrie Christmas, one and all!

**BIOGRAPHICAL AND
INTERPRETATIVE NOTES**

WHAT MEN LIVE BY

COUNT LEO TOLSTOI, who lived from 1828 to 1910, is a famous Russian writer, one of the world's greatest novelists. He was a philosopher and deep thinker, much interested in social, political, and religious reform. He liked to live the life of a poor man, and do manual labor on his estate. The best known of his longer works are *War and Peace*, *Anna Karénina*, and *Resurrection*. He wrote only a few short stories and plays. All classes of Russians were familiar to him, and his stories give us realistic and skillfully wrought pictures of both rich and poor.

Miss Virginia Church, who adapted *What Men Live By* to dramatic form, has been a member of Professor George P. Baker's 47 Workshop group in play-writing at Harvard University. She is now head of the English department in the Franklin High School, Los Angeles, California.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

You will note a good many Russian words preserved in Miss Church's translation. Why, do you suppose, did the translator decide to preserve these rather than supply English equivalents?

In the first dialogue between Simon and Matrena, before the entrance of Trofinoff, what significant items of plot-interest and plot-situation are brought out? What items of character-interest? Do you find that later developments in the play cause you to change your first impressions of Simon's character? Of Matrena's?

Study Tolstoi's use of supernaturalism. At what point in the play do you begin to suspect that Michael has qualities that lift him above the merely human? As you reread the play, do you see evidences of this appearing earlier than at the point where you first suspected it? In what characters is it centred? Are its effects limited to these characters?

Do you consider the Devil and the Angel necessary to the development of the plot? If not necessary, are they desirable?

What dramatic purpose is served by introducing the character of Anna Maloska? How would you support the thesis that the play is strengthened and vitalized by her presence?

If you were taking the part of Michael, how would you act after your first entrance, during the spirited personal conversation between Matrena and Simon?

How do you explain Matrena's ready suggestions that Michael stay permanently at the cobbler's home? Is it because she is at heart more kindly disposed than we first thought? Or is her changed attitude due to the subtle influence of Michael working subconsciously upon her?

Explain the significance of Michael's three smiles. You can see that, by emphasizing these, the author makes use of the important device of suspense.

How are you impressed by the "small talk" between Matrena and Anna? Is it employed more to reveal character, to advance the plot, or to lend naturalness and humor to the situation?

If you were playing the part of the Baron, what are the traits which you would try to make prominent? How could you do this? And if you were coaching the play, what specific directions would you make to Thedka and others to accentuate in the presence of the Baron the Baron's more prominent characteristics?

What speeches or actions can you name as foreshadowing the Baron's death?

How do the actions of little Nikita serve to bring out the character of Michael?

For what later significant situation in the play does Sonia's phrase — "The children of peasants" — prepare us?

How long did Michael remain in the cobbler's home? What specific speech answers this question? In what other way might the dramatist have indicated it? In what season did Michael come? In what season did he depart?

As you reread the dialogue between Simon and Thedka after Michael, "unseen by the others, goes into the other room," try to re-create in your own mind the sounds of their voices and their manners of speaking. What is the feeling most dominant in the situation?

Study the words which God spoke to Michael: "Thou shalt learn both what that is which dwelleth in men, and what that is which is not given to men to know, and what that is whereby

men live.” Be able to explain orally the application which is made of these three principles in the play.

As you think back through the play, what are the scenes which impress you as having most dramatic interest?

Barring Michael, which one of the characters do you find most interesting?

Words and Phrases

dessiatine: 2.7 acres.

kaftan: a long loose gown with sleeves reaching below the hands, fastened with a girdle and worn as an outer garment.

kvass: a thin sour beer.

baskmak: boot.

KINFOLK OF ROBIN HOOD

PERCY MACKAYE, who is the son of Steele MacKaye, dramatist, actor, and manager, was born in New York City in 1875. He has written many poems, and early became closely connected with the modern drama movement in America. Among his best-known long plays are *Jeanne d’Arc* and *The Canterbury Pilgrims*. His *Caliban* is a famous pageant. He is a graduate of Harvard, has been a lecturer and teacher, and is now a member of the faculty of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, where he holds a fellowship in poetry.

Kinfolk of Robin Hood, now published for the first time, was written while Mr. MacKaye was teaching in the Craigie School in New York. You may wish to read the original ballad of *Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly*, in order to compare the play with it. One version is found in the one-volume edition of Child’s *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, edited by Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge. Where lines occur in the play which are taken bodily from the ballad, or which are in ballad metre, they should be read in such a way as to convey to the audience an impression of their lilt and rhythm.

The author has called his play a “comedy heroic,” and this describes it very well. We might compare it with a comic opera, where serious matters are treated very lightly and the characters romp through their parts. The “green forèst” and old walled

city, as setting, lend a romantic note. Among plots, the triumph of clever rogues over stupid officials is always popular, and here, where the outlaws have committed no crime except to kill deer on land supposed to be reserved for the king, our sympathies are all with them. They are brave, daring, and gay, while the Sheriff and his men are stupid, greedy, and unattractive. Hence we feel no regret at the fate which the forces of the law suffer, and rejoice that the principle of poetic justice, by which each person receives due reward or punishment, is carried out so completely.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Describe the city of Carlisle, as you visualize it. What details of mediæval life does this play bring to your mind?

How would you describe the "atmosphere" of the play, or the feeling which it gives you? What descriptive adjectives would you apply to the life which the outlaws lead in the forest? How do you think the author regards it?

In what ways does this play remind you of the stories of Robin Hood?

Does it seem to you that the plot develops naturally, or do you think it is deliberately shaped toward the forgiveness of the outlaws? Which incidents, if any, seem to you particularly exaggerated? Why are such minor characters as Alec, the Porter, and the Jester necessary? What purpose does the introduction of the May-day dance serve? In the Robin Hood stories, as you may know, the King sometimes goes into the forest in disguise. But do you think it likely that the King and Queen would trust themselves alone there with only the Jester for guide?

Discuss the use of suspense in the plot.

What do you think causes Jean to betray the man who had befriended her?

How do Adam and Clym differ from William, though they are all outlaws? Which one of the three would you think the oldest? Why?

Would you judge Fair Alice to be a woman of spirit and courage? In what ways does she seem more gentle and delicate than the other characters? Do you think this may have something to do with the Queen's friendliness?

Words and Phrases

Clough: pronounced *cluff*.

prithe: I pray thee.

gentles: gentlefolk.

precarious: uncertain.

shaw: thicket, small wood, or grove.

ken: know.

ee: eye.

bent his bow to the break: as far as it would go without breaking.

quo: said.

hight: named, or called.

by my fay: by my faith.

carkin' and moonin': worrying and acting as if moonstruck.

bra': braw, or strong and brave.

parritch: porridge.

avidity: greediness, eagerness.

maun: must.

a constitutional: a walk for one's health, or for the benefit of the constitution.

astute: wise, knowing, crafty.

statute: a positive command or law.

oblivious pomposity: showing off without paying attention to anything else.

mickle: great.

epithalamium: marriage song or poem, in honor of the bride and bridegroom.

flout: mock, treat with contempt.

laudation: praise.

prerogatives: rights, privileges.

unco: remarkably, uncommonly

stone: fourteen pounds.

ilka: every.

sack: a dry white wine, from the French word *sec*, meaning dry.

St. Hubert: the patron saint of hunters, hence of these outlaws.

gilders: a play on the word "guilders" — golden coins.

fallow deer: a species common in England.

fee: money payment in tribute to the king.

NERVES

JOHN FARRAR, a graduate of Yale, was born in Burlington, Vermont, in 1896. He is now editor of *The Bookman*, which has under his direction become an important literary magazine.

During the World War he was a first-lieutenant in the aviation service.

In many modern plays, psychology, or the study of the mind and mental action of the characters, is a prominent feature. This is true of *Nerves*, which we may call a realistic psychological study. Against the background of the Great War we see the characters, young men whose daily lives are now made up of danger and excitement, under high nervous tension. By treating the whole matter lightly and occupying any spare time with trivial things, these aviators keep from breaking down. But for one of them the strain has grown too tense; he has given way to fear. The plot then develops as the result of an unusual situation working upon a sensitive spirit. We watch through our own eyes and those of his comrades the struggle which goes on in his mind; and the playwright, whose method is forceful and full of realistic detail, makes us feel the tremendous mental and physical pressure from which they are all suffering.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Discuss the different ways in which we are shown Lieutenant Coates's character and his fight against his weakness. You will notice that three different men try to talk to Captain Hill about him. What does this show of their feeling for him? How would you justify Captain Hill's attitude? Where does your sympathy lie? Where does the author's?

Do you think greater courage results from absence of fear than from overcoming fear? Would Lieutenant Coates have been afraid again? What do you think causes his death? Does this come unexpectedly, or has the playwright prepared you for it? Explain the effect which the ending has upon the impression left by the play.

What part does Langston have in the plot and in the development of Lieutenant Coates's character? Why does the playwright introduce the card games, the music, and the conversation between Captain Hill and Rook?

Where does the climax come with regard to the character development? Where with regard to Captain Hill's feeling? Where with regard to the action of the play?

How would you characterize the language which the play-

wright has the characters use? Discuss its suitability to the environment, and its effect upon the reader.

Words and Phrases

- musette bag*: a waterproof canvas bag, worn over the shoulder.
C. O.: Commanding Officer.
dud: a shell which has not exploded; hence, a failure.
reconnaissance: expedition for the purpose of getting information about the enemy.
Fokker: a German plane.
zoomed: climbed very suddenly and steeply.
vrrille: a spiral movement.
corn willey: corned beef.
sector: territory covered by a particular military unit.
orienting: getting one's bearings with respect to directions.
voilà: there you are!
terrain: an area of ground considered as to its military situation.
H. Q.: Headquarters.
oui: yes.
Boche: German.
ground-strafting: bombing; literally, "ground-punishment."
liaison: military movement in coöperation with other branches of the army.
fuselage: framework of an airplane.

THE VIOLIN-MAKER OF CREMONA

FRANÇOIS COPPÉE was born in Paris in 1842 and died in 1908. He began his literary work as a poet, and evidence of poetical quality and feeling appears in all of his short stories, novels, and plays. The short stories are perhaps better known than any of his other writings. His distinction in literature gained him election to the French Academy in 1884. Because of his simplicity and great popularity among the working classes, he is called "the poet of the poor."

In sharp contrast to *Nerves*, which is thoroughly realistic, *The Violin Maker of Cremona* is a romantic play. Here we have for setting a picturesque Italian city, two hundred years ago, which at once gives us a feeling of strangeness and romance, since it is not within our own experience. Our characters, while

they possess neither rank nor wealth, are musicians and skillful violin-makers, of unusual talent. We would naturally think of them as leading lives of a different quality from our own. The language, which we must consider in its relation to the setting and characters, adds to our feeling of unfamiliarity. The plot involves a good and beautiful girl; two men, both worthy, though not equally attractive, who love her; a contest of skill that is to determine which one she shall marry. While the ending may not be altogether happy for Filippo, it is still the happiest possible under the circumstances. Moreover, though there is humor and there is pathos, neither exists to such a degree that we could classify the play as humorous or pathetic. However, though the setting is strange, and we have a general feeling of being in an environment which is far from realistic, still we are dealing with genuine people, different from us, perhaps, but entirely human, and with incidents that might actually occur. Thus the play is not imaginative or fantastic. And all of these things together form the basis for designating it as one of romantic type.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

In such a play atmosphere is very important, and we have an opportunity for special study of this quality. What touches in the setting and conversation give you the clearest picture of the place and life? When you imagine the voices of the characters, how do you make them fit into this picture? Keeping in mind the fact that you are reading the play in translation, not in its original language, how would you describe the vocabulary and style? Do any passages suggest poetry to you? If so, try rewriting them in poetic form. Does this result make the general atmosphere more romantic or less so?

Discuss the character of Filippo. Why is he a tragic character? Would you call him the hero of the play? Do you think he is the strongest character? What does the incident of the dog show us? How does Sandro compare with him? What do the descriptions by Sandro and Ferrari show us about his power as a musician? What does his feeling for his violin show us about his nature?

Why is the nightingale called *Philomèle*? (Consult a classical dictionary.)

What qualities do you like best in Giannina? What does her attitude toward each of the three men reveal of her character?

Why do you suppose the author made Ferrari a humorous character? Is there any other humor in the play besides that introduced by him?

What seems to you to be the climax of the plot? How has the author prepared you for it? In what way do you justify the ending? Do you know any other plays or stories with similar plots?

Words and Phrases

Cremona: the capital of the province of that name, in Lombardy, northern Italy, on the River Po. It is very old, having been colonized by the Romans in 218 B.C. We know of it chiefly because of the very fine violins which were made there, but it is famous also for its painters and its architecture.

Master of the Violin-Makers of Cremona: Ferrari is the head of the guild which the violin-makers had organized. The guilds were mediæval associations whose members were pledged to assist one another in the pursuit of common ends. You will find them fully described in any encyclopædia. You may be interested to read the story of Wagner's opera, *Die Meistersinger*, which gives a good picture of such a guild among musicians.

Podesta: chief magistrate in the mediæval cities or States of Italy. The Italian word for *power*.

Saint Cecilia: patron saint of musicians. Perhaps you have seen her in Naujok's popular painting, seated at the organ, the angels above her scattering flowers upon the keyboard.

Stradivarius: Antonio Stradivarius (or Stradivari), who lived from 1644 to 1737, was the most famous violin-maker of Cremona. His son Francesco also became very skillful, and another son, Omobono, was noted for his ability to repair fine instruments. The master under whom Antonio studied was Nicolo Amati, the greatest of the artisans until his pupil surpassed him.

scherzo: a light, playful movement in music, generally in 3-4 time.

THE DYSPEPTIC OGRE

PERCIVAL WILDE, who was born in 1887, is a graduate of Columbia University and a resident of New York City. After graduating from college he was for several years engaged in the banking business, but since 1912 his chief interest has been the writing of

plays. His plays have been especially popular in Little Theatres. *The Dyspeptic Ogre* is distinctly different from other plays in this volume, and the type of its humor is far away from the ordinary. The author, having conceived his rare idea, bubbles over with mirth in the execution, and graciously invites us to share in his enjoyment. All young people who like fairy stories will at once be attracted by the title and the subtitle. And if there are any unfortunate boys and girls who are avowedly committed to a dislike of the fairy tale, they will, if they read a little way, be quickly attracted to this particular one, for they will easily detect a tendency on the part of Mr. Wilde gently to poke fun at this popular form of extravaganza.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

This brief play has, you will discover, a good many characters, many of the minor ones not strongly individualized. Can you explain why the lack of individualization in no way detracts from the effectiveness of the play?

Even in the major characters you will note that our character-interest is different from the ordinary. We seem to be living in the realm of the unreal, and the cruelty and bad temper of the Ogre are not in the least disturbing. We accept them simply as part of the passing farce. Because of this fact, is the interest any less keen?

You will note that the Jester's words and behavior remind us more of an amateur rehearsal than a finished performance, yet all that, of course, is thoroughly in keeping with the idea, and the extempore quality adds greatly to the charm and humor of the situation.

After looking up the word *anachronism*, apply it to the introduction of the telephone in the "Steenth Century." When would an anachronism be a real fault — as here it is a real virtue?

The Cook we all recognize as one who contributes richly to the humor of the play. In what particulars is she most successful? Do you regard her dialect as important?

One of the elements of comedy is the swift introduction of the unexpected. Cite the more interesting examples of this in the play. What particular development is to you most surprising?

Assuming that you are responsible for the costuming of the characters, what provision will you make for each character?

Words and Phrases

The vocabulary employed in writing this play is extremely simple. Perhaps the more unusual words are "*shpalpeen*" (spalpeen), *moat*, *drawbridge*, and *portcullis*, which you can of course find in the dictionary. List any other words that you cannot explain.

THE FIFTEENTH CANDLE

MISS RACHEL LYMAN FIELD, a graduate of Radcliffe and a former student of Professor George P. Baker in the 47 Workshop at Harvard, lives in New York City, where she devotes herself largely to dramatic work. Her best-known play is *Three Pills in a Bottle*.

Practically every one is interested in the issue of a contest. In *The Fifteenth Candle* the plot-interest is centred in the contest between two definitely different plans for the future of the gifted little heroine of the play. If the father's ideas are carried out, Rosa will leave school and go to work in a factory, where she will receive a small but immediate wage. If the ambition of the older sister is fulfilled, Rosa will continue in school and develop her native ability in art. The atmosphere of the play is heavy with the father's grim materialism in the midst of present poverty; it is relieved, however, by the idealism of those who have a clear vision of success in higher things — a success that will — at the same time that it gratifies the creative sense of art — bring more adequate financial reward. It is significant that the play here does not reveal the issue of the contest.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

If you were acting the part of Vedetti, what first impression of your personality would you wish to give your audience? By what means would you try to give this? And if you were taking the part of Stella?

What most impresses you in the first meeting and conversation of Vedetti and Goldstein?

Why does Goldstein say that "it's lucky you told me 'bout her bcin' so near fourteen"?

What are the traits most apparent in Rosa?

Notice that Stella, alone in the room, placing the candles on the cake, and in her other actions has an opportunity to create a tense dramatic interest through pantomime. Could she increase this by a soliloquy, or is silence more effective?

In the passionate conversation between Stella and Vedetti, immediately after this silent scene, which one exhibits the stronger character? Remember that by a strong character we do not necessarily mean a good character, but one who has the power to dominate a situation.

Notice after the entrance of Rosa and her teacher that the author does not rely merely upon conversation to reveal character and situation, but she freely supplies action. Enumerate the various actions. Is the play strengthened or weakened by this by-play?

Discussion will naturally centre around the fact that we reach the close of the play without knowing what the issue is to be. This is like most of the things we see in life — little scraps of events, situations undeveloped, all veiled by the future. Do you feel that in this case the play would have been stronger if Miss Field has provided a second act — perhaps five years later — in which the answer to our natural inquiry would have been given?

Perhaps some of the readers of the play may wish to write such an act.

THE BELLMAN OF MONS

MISS DOROTHY ROSE GOOGINS is a recent graduate of Radcliffe College and a member of the 47 Workshop Company. She has repeatedly taken prominent parts in the plays of the Harvard Dramatic Club.

The plot of *The Bellman of Mons*, while of purely original invention, has about it the atmosphere of legend that contributes to its charm and helps to make it artistically convincing. Those who study its structure will be interested in discovering how everything is contrived so as to lead up carefully to the climax, which comes at the very end of the action.

No careful reader will miss the ethical significance of the play. The tribute that is paid to the little peasant boy is a dual

recognition of his musical skill and his personal purity. One of selfish heart could not have removed the curse that kept the organ mute.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Is anything gained by setting the scene in an ancient time and distant place? Why not have chosen Chicago and made the date 1925?

Read carefully the first description of the appearance and dress of the Bellman of Mons, and note the items that seem most significant. Why are they significant? Mention various items in the old man's actions that harmonize with the description.

How do Jacques and Antoine help to accentuate the peculiarities of the old man? Do other persons in the play serve a similar purpose? Study all the various methods whereby the Bellman's character is portrayed.

How are the two peasants, Jacques and Antoine, clearly differentiated by the author?

What justification is there in the Evil One's addressing the Mayor of a hundred years ago as "Sinner"? What was the sin which the ancient Mayor committed?

While there is an atmosphere of romance about the play, there are some strangely realistic details. Mention them.

What is gained by introducing Annette?

Monsieur Gruyeau, aside from providing a certain plot-interest, serves as an interesting character foil, or contrast, to the Bellman. In what way?

If you were taking the part of the Town Crier, what character trait would you make most prominent? What does his vocabulary reveal?

How much time elapses between the beginning and the end of the play? How is this interval indicated? Do you think of any other device that might have been employed?

At the beginning of Act II we learn of the old cowherd's opposition to music. Compare this with the cobbler's attitude toward art in *The Fifteenth Candle*. Do you see any important points of contrast between the attitude of the two men? Do you excuse one more readily than the other? What points of comparison are there between the attitude of the mother here and the attitude of the older sister in Miss Field's play?

By what methods is the character of Jules portrayed? What are his most obvious traits?

How do you account for the presence of the old Bellman at the cowherd's cottage? How would you explain his immediate desire that Jules accompany him to the Trial-day at Mons? What gives the old man his confidence in the boy's ability to lift the curse?

Do you see why the author makes the old man pour the milk out of the window?

Do you see what dramatic purpose is served by making it necessary for Jules to go after the cows before he goes to Mons?

What is our feeling when the curtain goes down at the end of Act II?

What do you think of the dramatic device of having the cathedral door locked in this peculiar way? Do you feel that the old Bellman should be blamed? Which one of the characters is most ready to condemn him?

What does the interpreting of the proclamation contribute to the suspense?

Comment on the conclusion of the play. Would it act effectively at the close? Why, or why not?

Words and Phrases

Mons: (Môns): a city in Belgium, thirty-five miles southwest of Brussels.

Tartuffe: a character in Molière's play of that name: a hypocrite.

intermittently: from time to time; at brief intervals.

querulous: fretful, complaining, whining.

crescendo: increasing in strength and fullness of tone.

A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL

ANTON TCHEKOFF (or CHEKOFF) was born in 1860 at Tagonrog, Russia, of humble parents, but received a good education. He studied medicine at the University of Moscow, but soon gave it up for a literary career. He died in 1904.

In his novels, short stories, and in many of his plays, Tchekoff is intent on seriously portraying the sordid and disagreeable phases of Russian life. But in *A Marriage Proposal*, while he

lavishly reveals human frailties, he allows all the bitterness and all the passion to be lightly regarded by the reader, because the displayed weaknesses lose their ordinary significance and reality in the atmosphere of farce.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Of late years there has been a good deal of adverse criticism against a playwright's use of the aside and the soliloquy. Opponents of these devices have argued that such methods of conveying information are too artificial to withstand the current demand for naturalism on the stage. Study their use in this play and decide if they in any way mar the dramatic effect. Would substitute methods be more effective?

You will note in the beginning of this play that the description of the scene is very brief and simple, in contrast with the elaboration of details in such plays as *The Birthday of the Infanta*, *The Fifteenth Candle*, and *What Men Live By*. Do you feel that *A Marriage Proposal* suffers because of this simplicity? And do the others gain because of their full elaboration? What is the modern tendency?

Of the three character parts in the play, which one do you regard as the most difficult to present adequately? Specify the difficulties.

In what ways, other than by frequent drinks of water, — as indicated in the author's stage-directions, — could Lomov indicate his extreme nervousness?

In acting a part such as this in farce comedy, how far are you held in check by the demand of not overdoing the part?

When Natalia entering says, "Papa said to go in: there was a dealer in there who 'd come to buy something," do you feel that she is telling the truth? You might find it interesting to try to imagine just how Stephanovna did phrase his remark and make it capable of the interpretation which Natalia gives to the audience.

Is there any inconsistency in the idea that the two families "have been for decades on the friendliest, indeed the closest terms with each other," and all the while this conflicting land-claim apparently caused no disturbance? Or in farce, where we expect inconsistencies and absurdities, is such an item of little moment?

Aside from the laughable situations that on the stage would be brought out by extravagant passion and screams, note carefully the absurd humor in many of the remarks, such as Lomov's remark to Tschubukov: "No! No! You think I'm a fool! You're making fun of me! You call my property yours and then expect me to stand idly by and talk to you like a human being. That is n't the way a good neighbor behaves."

Find other places in the dialogue that reveal similar qualities of humor.

After thinking back over the play, do you find any places where the action or the dialogue seems to you over-absurd? And are there any situations which, if further developed, would have proved even funnier?

As you think of this comedy in contrast to plays very romantic, or deeply serious and tragic, do you discover that you have a strong personal liking for a particular type? Or is your own taste decidedly eclectic?

Words and Phrases

How many bricks have you cut? We more commonly use the verb *mould*, but in some processes of brick-making the soft clay is cut.
palpitation: rapid and irregular pulsations.

intriguer: one who does things in a secret, underhand way.

heath-cock: the male heath-grouse, one of the game birds of Europe.

rouble: the silver rouble was formerly worth seventy-seven cents, the paper rouble about fifty-one. After the World War the paper rouble became almost worthless.

Note. In contrast to *What Men Live By*, this play in translation preserves few Russian words. Except for the proper names, the reader unacquainted with its authorship would scarcely know that the play is a translation.

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

ELMA EHRLICH LEVINGER was born in Chicago. She has studied at the University of Chicago, and under Professor George P. Baker at Radcliffe, where she did successful work in play-writing. *Jephthah's Daughter* is one of the prize plays of the Religious Drama Contest, conducted by the Drama League of America.

One of the devices of the dramatist is the effective use of contrast. The bravery of a man may be revealed in sharper outline if his acts are seen in contrast with those of a coward. The tragic gloom that overshadows all the characters at the end of this Biblical play, *Jephthah's Daughter*, is felt all the more overpoweringly because at the beginning the scene was exultant with the dominant note of joy and festival. And yet the sense of tragedy at the end is not without its measure of compensation, for Jephthah's vow to his God is to be sacredly fulfilled. The daughter is to endure death; but in the fall of the sacrificial blow a father's honor and the honor of his tribe are vindicated.

This play affords splendid opportunity for students to discover how an entire play of this length amplifies a brief and simple story. The original version, in the eleventh chapter of Judges, is slight in contrast. Mrs. Levinger has set her imagination to work and has from the scant number of details invented many others in harmony with the Biblical account. The result is a complete dramatic composition, full of color and movement, and vibrant with individual emotions that merge into a common feeling, permeating the entire group.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Read the original story to see if any details have been omitted. If you discover any, try to decide why they have not been utilized.

What details in the stage arrangement seem to you of most significance? You cannot answer this question satisfactorily until you have read the entire play.

Can you explain how the interest of the play is strengthened by introducing the love motive between Sheilah and Nathan?

Do you think that the introduction of Dinah strengthens the play? What dramatic service does she perform?

Are the two girls, Michal and Tirzah, clearly differentiated? Or are they only colorless companions of Sheilah?

In the long argumentative contest concerning the carrying out of the vow, with what persons do you find yourself sympathizing — Jephthah? Elad? Nathan? Sheilah? If given power to decide the matter, what would have been your final decision?

Is there any one person who is responsible for the decision?

What is your attitude toward Elad? Do you feel that he is lacking in love for his son and grandchild, or do you admire him for his rigid allegiance to a religious conviction? In such a conflict should personal love always be sacrificed?

How can you justify Nathan's attitude?

Does the language of the play seem to you in close harmony with the seriousness of the theme? Point out special passages that well illustrate this harmony.

If given the privilege of acting any part in the cast, which part would you choose? Give reasons for your personal choice.

Considered in all its particulars, which would you name as the strongest character in the play? Justify this choice.

Comment on the part music and song are made to serve in this play.

As you review the different and more absorbing situations in the play, which one would you name as marking the climax, or the point of highest interest?

Refute or support this statement: "The interest in the characters and situations in *Jephthah's Daughter* is lessened by the fact that the scene is set in the far-distant period of the Old Testament, when the inventions of recent times — railroads, submarines, trolley cars, airplanes, automobiles, radio, and moving-pictures — were all undreamed of even by the most visionary." In your argument you may find it worth while to contrast the atmosphere of this play with the very modern atmosphere of *Nerves* or of *The Fifteenth Candle*. After making the contrast, try phrasing a sentence that exactly expresses your own ideas on this point.

Words and Phrases

rostrum: stage or platform for public speaking.

Tissot: a French painter famous for his pictures of scenes in the life of Christ and in Old and New Testament stories. Most of these paintings are now owned by the Museum of Brooklyn Institute, New York.

Song of Miriam: in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus.

timbrel: a small drum, or tambourine.

salaam: a low bow, with the palm of the right hand on the forehead.

myrrh: the gum of a shrub which grows in Arabia.

obeisance: a bow of homage.

A MINUET

LOUIS N. PARKER was born in France in 1852. He first became noted as a musician, and is a member of the Freiburg and Royal Academies of Music. Among the many plays which he has written or collaborated in, perhaps the best known are *Pomander Walk*, *Disraeli*, and *Joseph and His Brethren*. He has also written and directed pageants. At present he lives in England.

In *A Minuet*, as in *Nerves*, the dominant force is a great historical upheaval, which throws the characters into dramatic relief. Their response to the situation, their facing of the supreme test, makes of the play a psychological study no less absorbing than *Nerves*, though in setting the two are a century and a half removed, and in environment utterly different. But the greatest difference is in the methods employed by the two dramatists. *Nerves* has to do with everyday men, and its details are worked out with the utmost attention to the realistic. In *A Minuet*, Mr. Parker has handled his theme so delicately that we scarcely realize its fundamental tragedy, and with the Marquis and Marchioness, exquisite creatures of an artificial age, we glide lightly over the surface of their emotions, keeping up the delightful pretense to the last possible moment. The play is essentially romantic, and a beautiful example of lyric drama.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

In order to understand *A Minuet*, you should know something of the times in which the Marquis and Marchioness lived and the general nature of the French Revolution. You will find a short but sufficient account in a school history of mediæval and modern Europe.

Why do you suppose this period has appealed to so many writers? What other stories or plays do you know that deal with the French Revolution?

What do you learn from *A Minuet* of the court of France and of the life of the nobility?

How are you impressed by the opening passage in the play? How much of the theme is given you in the first speech of the Marquis after he stops reading?

How do you picture the Marquis in your mind? What sort of expression do you suppose his face wears? What do you think of his attitude toward life and toward his approaching death, as revealed in the first part of the play? If you know Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* you will find it interesting to contrast the Marquis with Sydney Carton — particularly their behavior just before they go to the guillotine.

How is the Marquis's character revealed in his conversation with the Gaoler? Do you see a sense of humor? What do his remarks about women show of his breeding?

How do you visualize the Marchioness? What change in the atmosphere, if any, does her coming make? Do you detect in her or in the Marquis any display of "middle-class emotion"?

In what places does the writer make use of suspense? Which is the most effective? Where do you think the climax of the play comes?

Discuss the appropriateness of the title of the play.

Do you consider the poetic form suitable for the theme? What effect does the language have upon the atmosphere? Does the fact that the play is written in verse lessen or augment the tragic effect? Discuss the ending.

Words and Phrases

Voltaire: the assumed name used by Jean François Marie Arouet (1694–1778), French philosopher and author. His writings had a great deal of influence on the thought of the time, and helped pave the way for the French Revolution.

guillotine: a machine for beheading a person by one stroke of a heavy ax or blade, which slides in vertical guides; used principally during the French Revolution.

Coblentz: a city in Germany, at the junction of the Rhine and Moselle rivers. After 1789 it was the headquarters of aristocrats who fled from France.

tumbril: a rude type of cart, used to take victims to the guillotine.

assignation: appointment for a meeting.

louis: a gold coin of France, first struck in 1640.

deprecatingly: in a manner expressing deep regret or disapproval.

jabot: ruffle worn on the shirt.

cockatrice: a fabulous serpent whose breath and look were supposed to be fatal.

Palais Royal: a famous theatre and pleasure garden of Paris.

ombre and *piquet*: games with cards.

Metz: a heavily fortified town in Alsace-Lorraine, at the junction of the Seille and Moselle Rivers.

insidiously: artfully, slyly.

potpourri: jar of flower petals mixed with spices, used to scent a room.

rosemary, lavender, musk: sweet-scented herbs and perfume.

Provence: formerly a province of southeastern France, famous in the Middle Ages for its troubadours, or wandering minstrels, and their songs.

cicala: cicada or locust, which makes shrill sounds by vibration of membranes.

Amadis: Amadis of Gaul, the hero of a cycle of romances of chivalry and highly celebrated as the perfect lover.

THE PLAY OF SAINT GEORGE

THE REVEREND J. M. C. CRUM, M.A., has been a teacher in the private schools of England, and very much interested in the movement for school dramatics, which is so strong throughout that country.

This little *Play of Saint George* is based on the old familiar legend of the patron saint of England. The original of the hero was an early Christian martyr. About him many stories of various national heroes have clustered, among them the tale of the rescue of a king's daughter from a dragon. During the middle ages, St. George came to be regarded as the model of chivalry and purity, as you know if you have read the canto of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* which deals with the Red Cross Knight and Una. He is, appropriately, the patron of the famous chivalric order of the Knights of the Garter. It is interesting to note that St. George's day is celebrated on the 23d of April, the anniversary of Shakespeare's death. In rural England the story of the fight with the dragon has long been used for mummery's plays — crude little dramas acted on festal occasions by the mummerys, bands of men and women who go about masked, in fantastic costumes. Naturally, much rough comedy has been introduced. Written versions are almost unknown, and the plays are passed on verbally, as ballads have been, from generation to generation.

Our play may be regarded as a good example of those used by mummers, since the chivalry, romance, and adventure themes are all entirely secondary to the humor.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Study this play carefully for points of similarity and of contrast with *Kinfolk of Robin Hood*. On what fundamental point are they alike? How do they differ? Do you think the *Play of Saint George* similar to *The Dyspeptic Ogre*? What have the three plays in common?

Read any other versions of the St. George story, or information about it, that you can find. *The Golden Legend*, by Jacobus de Voragine, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and E. O. Gordon's *Saint George* are interesting examples. What features of the story does this play embody?

How are the characteristics of the Mayor brought out? Is he highly individualized, or is he a type? Compare him with the King in this respect. Compare him with the Sheriff in *Kinfolk of Robin Hood*.

Who seems to be the most realistic character in the play? Why does he seem so?

How would you describe the type of comedy used? In what different ways does humor enter into the play? Is this another instance of the comic-opera attitude?

What scene do you consider most effective, from the point of view of action, characterization, plot-interest, and atmosphere? Is the same atmosphere maintained throughout?

What is your conception of the attitude of the actors toward their parts? Do you find opportunities for effective pantomime? In the first scene, between the Mayor and the four Councillors, how can facial expression be made most effective? What different voice-effects would make the situation most ludicrous? What bodily movements might be employed?

What is the dramatic effect of the Jester's entrance, and his defiance of the King's decree? How do you visualize the Jester during his expounding of the riddle, and his account of what he saw on the distant hillside?

Need the actors fear spoiling the effect by overdoing the absurd situations here, as in *A Marriage Proposal*? What points of resemblance are there between the two plays, if any?

Words and Phrases

Morris steps: steps in a folk dance common in rural England.

Corporation: the city, or the men governing the city.

alarums and excursions: expression used in stage directions for old plays, indicating noise and excitement.

Cappadocia: in ancient times a famous kingdom in Asia. It became a Roman province in 17 A.D. It was there that St. George was born.

halberdiers: guards armed with halberds, or long-handled weapons like axes.

mere: pool or lake.

bauble-bladder: the jester in a mediæval court carried an inflated, gaily painted bladder on a stick.

drag: brake to keep the cart from going too quickly.

lugubriously: ridiculously mournful.

quit you: acquit you; behave, act, conduct yourself.

lamentable: expressing grief and sorrow.

the Worm: the Dragon.

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE INFANTA

OSCAR WILDE (1856–1900), a famous English author, is noted for his stories, poems, essays, and dramas. Among his best known plays are *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Stuart Walker, who dramatized Oscar Wilde's story, has won his reputation through his Portmanteau Theatre and Portmanteau Plays. He combines skill as a playwright with skill as a producer.

Most readers of *The Birthday of the Infanta* will find their interest centring upon the two characters, the twelve-year-old Spanish princess and the curious little hunchback, here known as the Fantastic. The Infanta presents to us two definite sides of her character. In one she is the scion of a regal family, born to command and to participation in the formalities of the palace life, where a certain dignity is naturally demanded. In the other she is simply a child, thrilled with the hopes and excitements of ordinary juvenile life, and subject to all the curiosity and wonder of expectant children on their birthdays.

The centre of interest — in the character and situation of the Infanta — is gradually transferred to the Fantastic, as he stands for the first time before the mirror that reveals so tragically the significance of his grotesqueness. The gratification he has so exultantly felt when his songs and dancing brought smiles to the princess soon gives way to the sadness that comes with the cruel knowledge of his own deformity — a sadness that gradually bears down upon him and literally breaks his little heart.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Do you clearly see in the stage-picture each detail which the stage-directions particularize — the balcony, the garden, the stone archway, the brilliant sky, the gay flowers, and all the other items of interest?

Our first need as readers is to re-create this picturesque stage-setting which the dramatist has preconceived. This process of re-creation here calls specially into play our power to visualize colors, forms, and movements. Comment on each of these.

What trait of the Infanta's character is first revealed? What is the method of making this disclosure? What is the reader's attitude toward the Infanta because of this trait? Decide whether it adds to or detracts from her charm. Apply the foregoing questions to other of her traits as they are in turn portrayed.

As you hear reviewed the entertainments planned for the three birthdays, what are your reasons for preferring any particular one of these entertainments — if you do prefer one?

Suspense is an important element in a well-constructed play. Analyze its effect as employed in the series of guesses concerning the entertainment that has been provided for the day. How is it later employed before the Infanta and the Fantastic meet?

In the dialogue between the Fantastic and the Chamberlain, what is revealed concerning the character of each? When the Fantastic says that his songs are good, and he knows they are good because he has heard them, are we impressed with his egotism? Or if this is not egotism, what is it?

Aside from the interest which we have in the Fantastic's comments upon Echo, how is this a preparation for a later situation in the story?

What makes the Infanta "laugh in sheer delight"? What

are the things you like best in the "Song of the Autumn Leaf"? What makes it a good lyric — a poem that sings itself?

Study carefully the scene of the Fantastic before the mirror, so that you can note and comment upon the moods that gradually change from gayety to despair. If you were acting this part, how would you bring these out?

As you read the stage-directions for this play — particularly those that come at the end — do you discover any points that could not be brought out in the acting? If they cannot be brought out in the acting, of what value are they? Contrast the number and length of the stage-directions with the number and length in some of the older dramas that you have read — Shakespeare's, for example. How do you account for the change?

Words and Phrases

brocade: a silken fabric woven with raised figures.

camerera: a Spanish term, designating the head waiting-maid to a person of high birth.

Valladolid: (Väl-yä-tho-lith): a city of central Spain. For Americans it has a special interest, as it is the place where Columbus died.

Barbary apes: apes from one of the Barbary States, which are in the northern part of Africa.

bravely: to dance bravely means to dance finely.

we shall be highly displeased: this is an example of the royal "we."

One not of royal birth would simply say, "I."

Caffarelli: (Käf-fä-rel'-le): (1703-1783): a noted Italian singer, who was a favorite with the court ladies of the eighteenth century.

treble: applied to a musician, the term means a singer whose notes are high; here the equivalent of tenor, though treble ordinarily means soprano.

siesta: afternoon rest, usually taken in a reclining position.

tessellated: arranged in squares or checkers.

intermezzo: (in'tēr-měd'zo): a short piece played between longer musical selections.

mi bella: my beautiful.

mantilla: a woman's long veil used in Spain like a scarf or shawl.

THE CHRISTMAS GUEST

CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. She is the author of a great many plays for young people, and has also written valuable books on costuming and producing.

The Christmas Guest belongs to the familiar genre of the miracle play, and in this respect is similar to *What Men Live By*. Miss Mackay creates a setting of appropriate simplicity, gives her characters eagerness and faith, and thus makes her plot work itself logically and convincingly to the climax. When read, or produced with the most rudimentary properties, the little play never fails to make an impression of depth and feeling.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Compare *The Christmas Guest* with *What Men Live By* with respect to atmosphere, plot, and style. Which do you consider the more effective? The more convincing?

How does Miss Mackay give you the contrast between the storm without and the comfort within?

What is the dramatic advantage in placing this scene in the sixteenth century?

After reading the stage directions printed at the beginning, comment on their helpfulness to you as a producer. What are the items which you can be sure you would not have thought of without Miss Mackay's ingenious suggestions?

Of what advantage are the Prologue and Epilogue?

What is gained by making the language slightly archaic? What are some of the archaic phrases?

As a means of determining whether the play is more effective in poetry than in prose, try putting a page or two into prose form, and then compare the two versions.

You will find it interesting to study the various items that create the situation and mood, and prepare us for the entrance of the disguised angel. Make a list of these.

Justify Rosamund's remark, "That speech is passing strange." In what way was the beggar's speech "passing strange"?

In order that proper significance may, in the acting of this play, be given to the presence of the beggar, what attitude should the children show? In what manner must they make their parting gifts?

What is the real significance of the transformation of the beggar into the angel? What features make this transformation most striking? Would the play have been less convincing without this ending?

Compare the scene with the ending of *What Men Live*

By. What similar methods or devices, if any, do the two authors use?

Note upon what comparatively slight evidence we accept the statement of Frances that the beggar was in reality the angel. Is it of dramatic importance that we have Rosamund's corroborating words? What has prepared us for this easy acceptance?

What seems to be the most prominent characteristic of this group of children? What does the play show of the power of example?

Are the characters of the different children made distinct? Is it important that they should be? Which one seems to you the most outstanding?

Words and Phrases

joyance: enjoyment, joyfulness, gayety.

passing strange: surpassingly strange, or exceedingly strange.

churls: rough, surly, ill-bred people.

pleasure me to wear: give me pleasure by wearing.

wassail bowl: bowl containing the spiced beverage drunk at Christmas and other feasts.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

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The following bibliographies have been prepared with the purpose of supplying useful information to those engaged in dramatic work with the young people to whom the contents of this book will especially appeal. The material has been carefully sifted from the vast number of plays and books now published, and represents that which we recommend as particularly valuable, rather than all that is available.

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FOREST PRINCESS, AND OTHER MASQUES, THE, by Constance D'Arcy Maekay: Henry Holt & Co., New York.

A chapter on The Revival of the Masque, and: The Forest Princess; The Gift of Time; A Masque of Conservation; The Masque of Pomona; A Christmas Masque; The Sun Goddess; and chapters on Costumes for Masques and Music for Masques.

FORM-ROOM PLAYS, JUNIOR BOOK, compiled from English Literature by Evelyn Smith: E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. Dramatizations of: The Swineherd; The Parlement of Foules; Thor's Hammer; The Death of Balder; The Travelling Companion; The Cock and the Fox; A Christmas Carol; The Perfect Holiday (from "Little Women"); Alice in Wonderland; Circe's Palace; Robin Hood; The Lady of the Lake; A Midsummer Night's Dream.

FORM-ROOM PLAYS, SENIOR BOOK, compiled from English Literature by Evelyn Smith: E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. Dramatizations of: The Mill on the Floss; Quentin Durward; Nicholas Nickleby; The Vicar of Wakefield; Northanger Abbey; Comus; A Tragedy Rehearsed; The Alchemist.

JUNIOR PLAY BOOK, THE, edited by Helen Louise Cohen: Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York.

Short foreword and note to teachers, biographical information, comments, and questions. The Passing of Sigfrid; Ulysses;

Jephthah's Daughter; The Forfeit; The Trysting Place; Square Pegs; The Twisting of the Rope; Paddy Pools; The Queen's Lost Dignity; Followers; Brother Sun.

LITTLE PLAYBOOK, THE, by Katharine Lord: Duffield & Co., New York.

The Greatest Gift (a Christmas play); Katjen's Garden; June Magic; The Minister's Dream (Thanksgiving); The Day Will Shakespeare Went to Kenilworth; The Yuletide Rose.

ONE-ACT PLAYS BY MODERN AUTHORS, edited by Helen Louise Cohen: Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York.

Introduction on the workmanship of the One-Act Play, Theatres of To-day, The New Art of the Theatre, Playmaking, and the Theatre in the School. The Boy Will; Beauty and the Jacobin; The Pierrot of the Minute; The Maker of Dreams; Gettysburg; Wurzel-Flummery; Maid of France; Spreading the News; Welsh Honeymoon; Riders to the Sea; A Night at an Inn; The Twilight Saint; The Masque of the Two Strangers; The Intruder; Fortune and Men's Eyes; The Little Man. (*Rather mature.*)

ONE-ACT PLAYS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, edited by James Plaisted Webber and Hanson Hart Webster: Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.

Chapters on The One-Act Play as Literature, The One-Act Play in Connection with English Composition, The One-Act Play as a Means for Developing Dramatic Talent, The Technique of Vocal Expression, Stage Deportment and the Principles of Acting, Play Production, and working lists of plays, books, and periodicals. Plays classified into groups. Under "Plays of Mood and Character," The Boy Comes Home; Followers; A Sunny Morning; The Falcon; The Coming of Fair Annie; The Romancers; My Lady's Lace. "Dramatic Episodes," The Lord's Prayer; The Cottage on the Moor; Solemn Pride; $X = O$: a Night of the Trojan War; The Rising of the Moon. "Plays of Fancy," Nevertheless; Manikin and Minikin; The Beau of Bath; The Unseen Host; The Shoes That Danced; Colombine.

PLAYS FOR CLASS-ROOM INTERPRETATION, edited by Edwin Van B. Knickerbocker: Henry Holt & Co., New York.

An Introduction on the place of Dramatics, and a chapter each on Class-room Work with a Play and Detailed Interpretation. The Golden Doom; Two Crooks and a Lady; Will o' the Wisp; Spreading the News; The Turtle Dove; Allison's Lad; Ulysses (Act III, Scene 2).

PLAYS FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN, edited by Anna M. Lutkenhaus, with an Introduction on Dramatic Work for Children — Its Place in the Elementary School, by Margaret Knox: The Century Co., New York.

Contains an outline for a year's programmes for special days. Master Skylark; Barnaby Lee; Through the Looking Glass; Town Meeting in Botetourt, Virginia, 1860; A Handful of Clay; Lady of the Lake; The Fairy Minstrel of Glenmalure; A Nature Play in a City School; Our Choice; Every Boy; Thanksgiving Day, 1696; The Crowning of the Dryads; The Birds' Story of the Trees; Reforming a Bad Boy; Well Babies; A Geographical Squabble; A Grammar Play; Mrs. Pollywigs and Her Wonderful Waxworks; Four Queens of England; A Tribute to America. (*Some of the material is too juvenile.*)

SHORT PLAYS FROM DICKENS, arranged by Horace B. Browne: Scribner's, New York.

TREASURY OF PLAYS FOR CHILDREN, A, edited by Montrose J. Moses: Little, Brown & Co., Boston.

The Little Princess; The Silver Thread; The Testing of Sir Gawayne; Pinkie and the Fairies; Punch and Judy; The Three Wishes; The Toy-maker of Nuremberg; Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil; Master Skylark; Alice in Wonderland; The Travelling Man; The Months — a Pageant; The Forest Ring; The Seven Old Ladies of Lavender Town. A reading list. (*Some of the plays are rather juvenile.*)

PLAYS NOT IN THE FOREGOING VOLUMES

- ALICE IN WONDERLAND, by Lewis Carroll, adapted by Mrs. Burton Harrison: The Dramatic Publishing Co., Chicago.
- BIRDS' CHRISTMAS CAROL, THE, by Kate Douglas Wiggin: The Macmillan Company, New York.
- BISHOP'S CANDLESTICKS, THE, by Norman McKinnel: Samuel French, New York.
- HILLTOP, by Louise Ayers Garnett: The Macmillan Company, New York.
- HOLLY TREE INN, THE, by Charles Dickens, adapted by Mrs. Oscar Beringer: Samuel French, New York.
- JACKDAW, THE, by Lady Gregory: G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.
- LITTLE KING, THE, by Witter Bynner: Mitchell Kennerley, New York.
- LITTLE WOMEN and LITTLE MEN, by Louisa M. Alcott, adapted by Elizabeth L. Gould: Little, Brown & Co., Boston.
- LOST PRINCE, THE, by John Jay Chapman: Moffatt, Yard & Co., New York.
- MASTER WILL OF STRATFORD, by Louise Ayers Garnett: The Macmillan Company, New York.
- PANDORA, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.
- PIPER, THE, by Josephine Preston Peabody: Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.
- POT OF BROTH, THE, by William Butler Yeats: The Macmillan Company, New York.
- RING, THE, by Mary MacMillan: Stewart, Kidd & Co., Cincinnati.
- ROSE AND THE RING, THE, by William Makepeace Thackeray, adapted by J. B. Greynough: Walter H. Baker Co., Boston.
- SCARECROW, THE, by Percy MacKaye: The Macmillan Company, New York.
- SIN OF AHAB, THE, by Anna Jane Harnwell: George H. Doran Co., New York.
- SIR DAVID WEARS A CROWN, by Stuart Walker: Stewart, Kidd & Co., Cincinnati.
- THREE PILLS IN A BOTTLE, by Rachel Lyman Field: Brentano's, New York.
- WHY THE CHIMES RANG, by Elizabeth McFadden: Samuel French, New York.

BOOKS ABOUT THE THEATRE

- CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL THEATRE, THE, by A. M. H. Heniger: Harper & Brothers, New York.
- CHOOSING A PLAY, by Gertrude A. Johnson: The Century Co., New York.
- COSTUMES AND SCENERY FOR AMATEURS, by Constance D'Arcy Mackay: Henry Holt & Co., New York.
- CRAFTSMANSHIP OF THE ONE-ACT PLAY, THE, by Percival Wilde: Little, Brown & Co., Boston.
- DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE, by George P. Baker: Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.
- FESTIVALS AND PLAYS IN SCHOOL AND ELSEWHERE, by Percival Chubb and others: Harper & Brothers, New York.
- HOW TO PRODUCE AMATEUR PLAYS, by Barrett H. Clark: Little, Brown & Co., Boston.
- HOW TO PRODUCE CHILDREN'S PLAYS, by Constance D'Arcy Mackay: Henry Holt & Co., New York.
- ON THE ART OF THE THEATRE, by Edward Gordon Craig: Browne, Chicago.
- PLAY WAY, THE, by H. Caldwell Cook: William Heinemann Ltd., London.
- PRODUCING IN LITTLE THEATRES, by Clarence Stratton: Henry Holt & Co., New York.
- STUDY OF THE DRAMA, A, by Brander Matthews: Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.
- TECHNIQUE OF THE ONE-ACT PLAY, by Roland B. Lewis: John W. Luce & Co., Boston.

MAGAZINES DEVOTED TO THE THEATRE

- THE DRAMA: published by the Drama League of America, Chicago.
- THE LITTLE THEATRE REVIEW: published by the New York Drama League.
- THE PLAYGROUND: published by the Playground and Recreation Association of America.
- THE THEATRE: published by the Theatre Magazine Company, New York.

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